



giving him  
the  
cold shoulder!

*Round about the time that Napoleon was meeting his Waterloo, English girls were doing their best to look like statues. They draped themselves in 'off the shoulder' high-waisted Grecian garments, which they damped, so that the material would cling to their figures. Men copied them by damping their pantaloons before putting them on and then drying them skin-tight.*

'The fashion at Ekco is to keep apace with the times in everything plastic. Designing, tooling and moulding—we do it all—'under one roof'. Whatever *your* problems in plastics, however large or complex, we have the know-how and experience to offer you the perfect solution. Get in touch with us at Southend!

 **EKCO** plastics

**E. K. COLE LTD.** (Plastics Division), **SOUTHEND-ON-SEA, ESSEX.** *Members of the British Plastics Federation*

NUMBER 79  
JULY 1955

## Contents

### LONDON AIRPORT

*John E. Blake* 10

### THE PROGRESS OF PACKAGING

*Norbert Dutton* 17

### SPACE FOR DECORATION - A REJOINDER

*Reyner Banham* 24

### A NEW BRITISH TYPEWRITER

*L. Bruce Archer* 26

### ARTIST IN GLASS 30

### FURNITURE SURVEY: 5

All-purpose chairs

*A. Gardner-Medwin* 31

### STAND INTO STAGE SET 35

### FLUORESCENT LIGHTING:

### UNIT DEVELOPMENT

*John Gray* 36

### AUSTRALIAN MARKET REPORT 38

### POSTERS IN THE LOUVRE

*René Elvin* 39

### OVERSEA REVIEW

Ireland 42

Italy 44

### NEWS 47

### LETTERS 48

### BOOKS 49

\* \* \* \* \*

EDITOR: Michael Farr

### EDITORIAL ADVISERS:

Sir Gordon Russell, Alister Maynard,  
Paul Reilly, J. Noel White

ART EDITOR: Peter Hatch

ASSISTANT EDITORS: John E. Blake,  
Richard Rhodes

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER: Dennis Hooker

BUSINESS MANAGER: Arthur Sudbery

EDITORIAL  
CIRCULATION  
ADVERTISEMENTS

Tilbury House, Petty France,  
London SW1  
Telephone ABBey 7080

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES: POST FREE  
UNITED KINGDOM 30s NORTH AMERICA \$5

# Design

## Changing markets

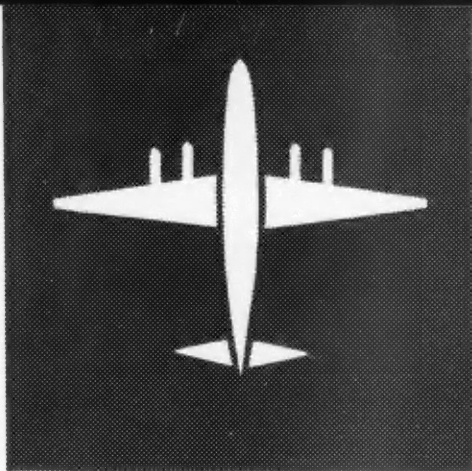
WHO WAS IT SAID: "If you can make a mousetrap better than your neighbour, the world will beat a track to your door"? Since then the world seems to have changed its tactics, for it now tends to sit in steam-heated offices at the end of telephones, while the makers and their agents beat the track to its polished mahogany doors. Even so the coat you have to trail to catch the discerning eye has to be better, price for price, than your neighbour's. Quality still tips the scales in a competitive market, for it is not just a perquisite of the luxury trades, an intangible aurora which hangs only round Bond Street and the right end of Fifth Avenue. On analysis it is simply sound materials, skilled workmanship and good design. Add them together and you have quality; take away one - no matter which - and you haven't.

In stable markets good traditional designs have a long life. But markets, like the men who make them, grow, reach maturity and give way to their successors. Change, quick or slow according to its circumstance, seeps in, induced by the shifting value and availability of materials, or the development and multiplication of techniques. Mahogany comes from Africa instead of Honduras, kiln dried rather than seasoned; pottery shapes which were pressed are now cast, suggesting a difference in design. Contrariwise the framework which was cast and bolted is today fabricated from standard sections of mild steel. Under persistent economic pressure ways of living and the needs of consumers are modified. The best kitchen range of 1860 is the bane of 1955.

In markets which are developing in territories overseas where the exploitation of raw materials creates purchasing power, and in the older markets where changes seem to be stirring, quality and its handmaid design will have great influence, delivery dates and terms of trade being equal. To a country which must export against the mounting industrial capacity of its neighbours, the task of constantly re-thinking its designs becomes a vital part of the job.







# London airport

John E. Blake

**A**N AIRPORT IS BY NATURE a sprawling area of scarred grass and concrete that is a perpetual challenge to the planner. Few airports are designed – they just grow. And as they grow pieces are added here and there – another building for a new operator, an extra hangar for an expanding fleet, longer runways for faster aircraft – until most airports today epitomise the chaos of uncontrolled expansion. This situation is clearly apparent at London Airport which has become, in under ten years, the busiest in Europe, handling (in 1954) over one and a half million passengers, and 32 thousand tons of freight and mail a year. But the present confusion of temporary huts, signposts, winding roadways and traffic that flanks any of the main entrances was foreseen as long ago as 1950 when the new plan of a permanent control and passenger area in the centre of the airfield, approached by a half-mile long tunnel, was put in hand. The Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation commissioned Frederick Gibberd to design and co-ordinate the scheme, and now that the control tower and one section of the passenger buildings are finished we have for the first time a glimpse of what a modern, meticulously planned terminal can be like.

This is truly the modern gateway to Great Britain and as such deserves the highest standards of design to express both the vitality of the nation that lies beyond and the romance of our most advanced form of travel. It is certainly the largest and by far the most important public building project that has been undertaken in this country since the Festival of Britain. As such, the criticisms of the exteriors that have been made elsewhere may well be justified for in attempting to create an English character, the architect has perhaps missed an opportunity to design a building as experimental in conception as the 'Viscount'

which brings passengers to its doors, or the 'Comet IV' and 'Britannia' which together promise new conquests of time and space.

But whatever reservations one may have about the exteriors there is no question about the success of the inside. Here 'Englishness' has been seen not as an excuse to play down to a nebulous good taste but as a chance to display the best furniture and furnishings that are available in this country. Thus the traveller from abroad (he may be a holiday-maker or a business man prepared to place valuable contracts) can gauge at a glance the capabilities of British designers – for all foreign products have been excluded. Many of the examples were chosen from 'Design Review'\* but where suitable pieces were not available special designs were commissioned by the architects. The balcony lounge tables, with black and white designs in 'Warerite' illustrating English cathedrals, is one notable example combining an appropriate idea with imaginative and restrained handling.

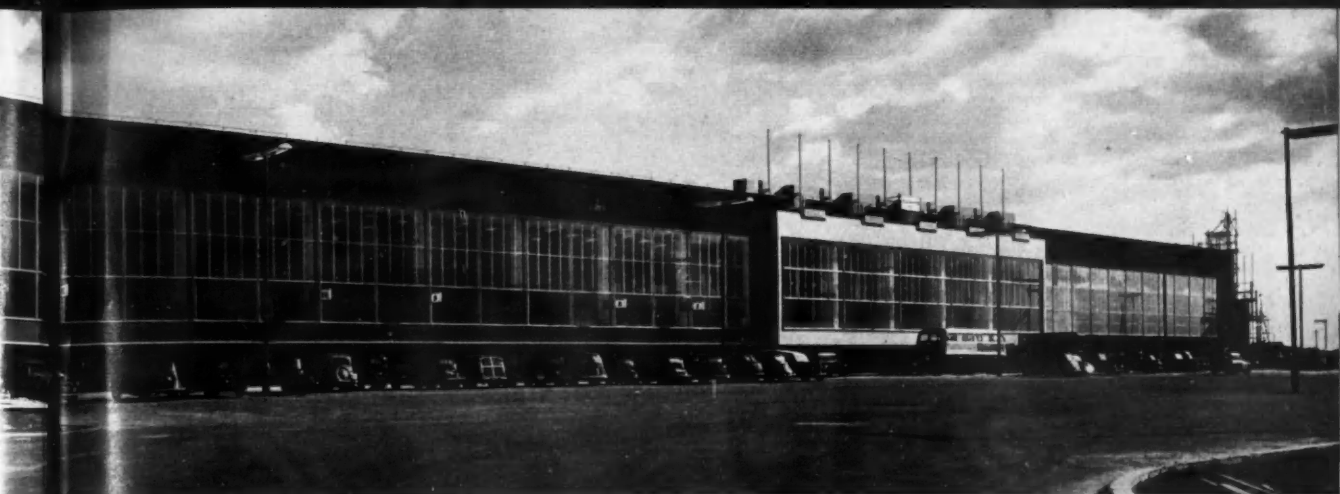
Close examination of the interiors does not, however, reveal many outstanding innovations. The colour schemes are cheerful and unusual with a pronounced leaning towards fashionable orange and peacock blue offset with muted greys and white. Notices and direction signs are neat and clear, obviously the hand of a single person throughout (which incidentally contrasts violently with the muddled signposting of the route leading to the central terminal area). Yet these are but variations on the established practice of modern interior design. The impact lies less with the individual pieces or with any particular treatment, but with the sheer scale on which it is all carried out. The towering glass-walled concourse dwarfs the figures who ply backwards and forwards across its spacious marble floor. Even now a temporary wall divides from view the unfinished parts of the building. When it comes down the vast length of the concourse will be increased in length by a third forming the other wing to the off-centre staircase which leads to quiet lounges and restaurants on the second floor, and out on to terrace gardens. The other public rooms provide continual changes of scale and character. The barn-like customs and immigration halls are all utility – surely more could have been done to brighten the traditionally dreary surroundings for these formalities. But if confidence flags at this point it is soon restored with the colourful and intimate health control areas which almost immediately open again to the long 'airside' waiting room. Beyond is the shiplike veranda through which passengers pass on their way to the aircraft.

The South-East Face Passenger Building is for the 'short haul' services to Europe and for internal flights within the British Isles. Next to it is the smaller unfinished building for the 'long haul' services to the U S A and the Far East. But these do not represent the final answer to the problem of providing a compact airport terminal. The buildings form one side and the apex of a diamond which will eventually house administrative offices and other services connected with the airport with provision for other passenger buildings when these become necessary. And so even if the airport is still unfinished, and indeed, with the rapid developments in air travel it is doubtful if it ever will be, there is at least a plan to control its growth. In this respect it is vitally important that the temporary buildings should not be used for some other purpose once their present occupants move to the central area. They should be pulled down and replaced perhaps by simple gardens or stretches of grass flanking the Bath Road. Otherwise the plan will defeat its own ends.

What the traveller sees on his way through the building is described in picture and commentary on the following pages.

\* The illustrated record of well designed British products at the London headquarters of the CoID.

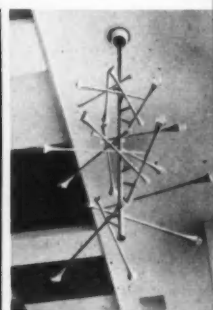
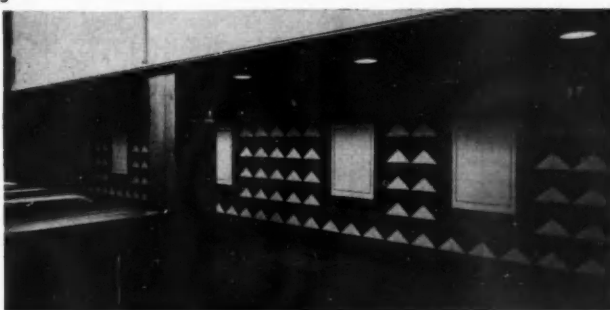




THE ROUTE FOLLOWED by passengers is controlled by a series of channels which lead from the 'landside' to the 'airside' of the building. These channels (there are ten in the South-East Face Building) allow each group of passengers to proceed through the various formalities in a logical sequence without becoming involved with other groups. Conveyor belts carry luggage to the loading points, and escalators take passengers to the first floor where the main activities of the building are carried out.

The long windows of the concourse dominate the 'landside' view of the passenger building, 1. Underneath are the ten channel entrances (clearly marked by numbers) where the coaches park. The architect chose a mellow brown brick to express the character of traditional English building though this is contrasted with stone which frames the central area. On the right of this are the four channels which have yet to be completed. The channel numbers are also incorporated on the handles of the teak entrance doors, 2, and are in white plastic on a silver bronze back plate. The notice on the left of the door is an example of the clear typography which is one of the most successful aspects of the building. Beyond the entrance door is a low vestibule where luggage is put on conveyor belts to the customs control, while passengers pass quickly through on their way to the concourse above. Here there is no cause to tarry but the velvety elm panelled walls serve to whet the appetite for visual pleasures to come, and the bold pattern of black grey and yellow tiles on the back wall, 3, draws the attention to the foot of the escalators, 4. The escalators themselves deserve mention, for no attempt has been made to disguise their shape in a solid mass of masonry and plaster which is the normal method. The mechanism has been cased to the architects' design - dark green 'Ware-rite' on the inside, polished aluminium on the top, fluted aluminium outside - and the free-standing shapes have been left to take their place naturally among the other architectural forms. From the top of the escalator the full vista of the concourse comes into view, 5. Here the scale is breathtaking, for all the channels meet in this one vast hall. There are shops for last minute purchases, information desks for B E A and other airline operators, while leading off are

3

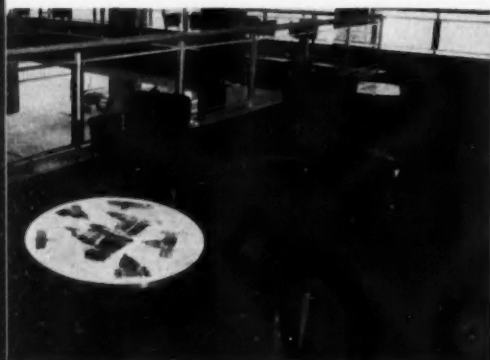


5





7



8



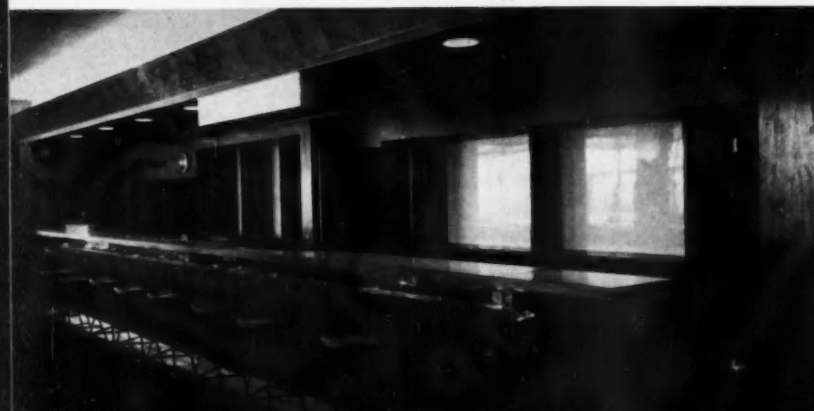
9



10



12



11

lounges and restaurants, buffets, nurseries and a ladies' powder room. Above the concourse the checkerboard pattern of the great ceiling is designed to minimise the echoes from the loudspeakers and footsteps over the marble floor. Our photograph, however, taken before the building was completed, does not show the row of chandeliers, 6, which lend the one note of uninhibited exuberance to the otherwise austere proportions. At the head of each channel passengers can relax in comfortable tub chairs covered in dark green hide or on long elegant settees with a hand woven cream fabric covering and black cushions.

If there is time to spare travellers will want to visit the public rooms and balconies on the next floor. These are approached by a staircase, 7, which leads out of the central concourse area - a staircase which is not too grand or imposing, but practical and graceful with its half-landing to break the ascending line. On either side it is flanked by columns, clad with English marble, which rise to a ceiling pierced by a series of lighting domes. These domes, like a hovering squadron of flying saucers, make a powerful impact on the eye. They juxtapose the effects of pink fluorescent light reflected on the inner surface with natural daylight which comes in through the central cylindrical cone and seems greeny-blue by contrast. Surrounding the stair-well is the balcony lounge, 8, softly carpeted and quiet and providing a fine view of the concourse which stretches out below. The tables with the cathedral design can be seen here but the tub chairs, similar to ones used downstairs, are a temporary measure and have now been replaced by others, 9, with open arms and a cane back. Behind this lounge the buffet bar, 10, continues the atmosphere of unpretentious luxury. But the use of so many chairs of the same type and with the same covering (red-orange on the inside, grey on the outside) instead of giving an effect of unity is only monotonous. A mixture of chairs and coverings would have lent variety to the eye. This seems to be a common fault in the planning of many interiors today and may well give rise to the idea that modern furniture is dull. There is relief for this monotony, however, in the metal legged bar stools and the bar itself, 11, which contrasts ribbed teak panelling with a satin bronze strip and swing doors of the same material. But the full effect is lost in the photograph, for the bottles and glasses are necessary to complete the design.

While studying the all-over effect of these interiors the visitor should not fail to take note of the details, for these contribute more than is often realised. Good examples are the door handles, 12, which are pleasing but unpretentious in their use of satin bronze finished tube with white plastic grips. Beyond these doors is the public restaurant, 13, with sweeping views across the airfield. Though again the full effect is only apparent when the tables are laid and there are white cloths and flowers to add spots of colour, the quality of light and space can be seen. This spaciousness is reflected in the cash desk, 14, and serving tables which avoid by the use of slender metal legs the heavy look common to this type of furniture. A disadvantage, however, would seem to be their slight unsteadiness,





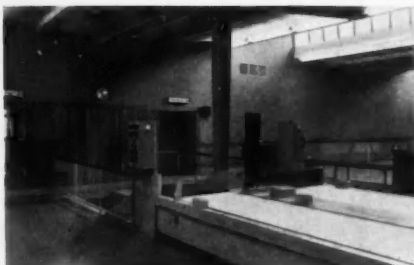
13



14



15



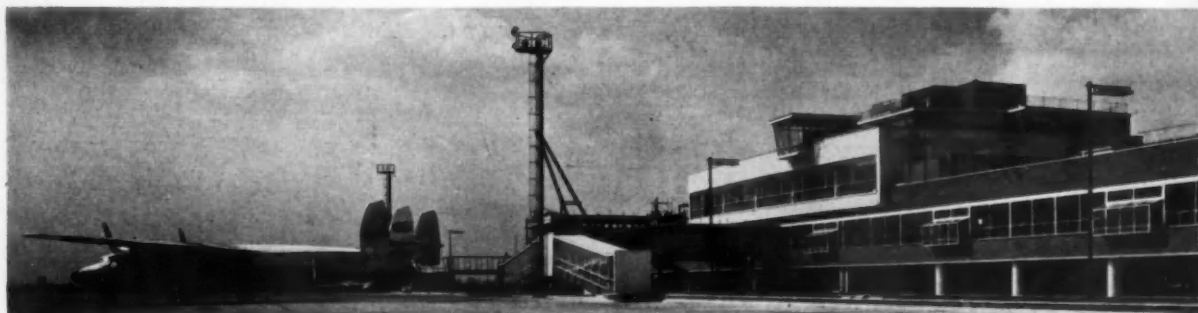
16



17



18



19

a fault not repeated in the chair which has a charm in its proportion and choice of woods that is exceptional.

When the time has come for the traveller to proceed with the customs and other formalities he must return to his appropriate channel in the main concourse. This is clearly marked, 15, by signs which are a paragon of neatness and order. In contrast to the concourse area the customs and passport controls, 16, seem bleak. In neither of these rooms do passengers wait long and it may therefore be extravagant to have more than the essential requirements for efficient operation. Yet the furniture seems unnecessarily heavy and austere and an opportunity to brighten the dreary surroundings associated with this aspect of travel has been lost. Once through these halls, however, the high standards return in the 'airside'

waiting room, 17. Here passengers can rest until they are called to their aircraft which waits on the 'apron' below. The room is perhaps the most colourful of all with brilliant orange pillars and chair cushions seen against the lime green paper on the end wall and the dark purple grey painted wall at the rear. Showcases have been added to divide the room into more intimate sections but these are additions not shown here. They may be a mixed blessing, however, for they will be let to private firms and there will be no control over the design of the displays which they contain. The room suffers less than the second floor bar from having the same seating throughout, for there is a greater variety in the shapes of the chairs, tables and in wall seating units, 18, and there is more in the colour scheme to divert the attention. Even so a few chairs of

a different type would have been an advantage.

On their way to the aircraft passengers pass out through a veranda and down sloping ramps, 19, which in character resemble closely the Festival style. The 'airside' waiting room is therefore the last room seen by the departing passenger, and also the first for the new arrival. As such it will make the biggest and longest impression and required an extra 'flair', an extra effort of imagination, in its treatment. It has not fallen short of these requirements and can claim to be the most pleasing room in the building.

But the story does not end here, for in one particular item the airport demonstrates at first hand the lessons of co-ordinated planning and *laissez faire* development. The quality of the direction signs and notices within the building has already been





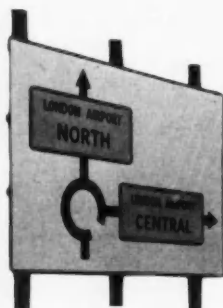
20



21



22



23



24



25



26



27



28



29



30

mentioned. 20, 21 and 22 show further examples which deserve high praise. Compare these with some of the direction signs along the route leading to the building, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and with lettering on one of the airport coaches, 30. Some are acceptable, but most are crude and clearly no single policy has attempted to control their design. It is a tragedy that hardly before the new central terminal area is open the clutter of conflicting signs should already have sprung up. In the building the architects have proved the value of using a trained designer. The responsibility for the road signs rests with the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, whose policy for this aspect of the airport scheme is hardly compatible with that for the building which it commissioned.

**Designers and manufacturers of furniture, furnishings and fittings shown in this article**

*The numerals refer to the illustration numbers*

**ARCHITECT** Frederick Gibberd

**2** TYPOGRAPHY, Colin Forbes (see also 15, 16, 20, 21 and 22)

**3** TILES, designer Peggy Angus, maker Carter & Co Ltd

**4** ESCALATORS, maker Waygood-Otis Ltd

**5** 'SPRINGBOK' TUB CHAIR, designer A. J. Milne, maker E. Horace Holme Ltd, GREEN HIDE by Connolly Bros. 'XU4' SETTEE, designer Robin Day, maker Hille of London Ltd. OCCASIONAL TABLES, designer Frederick Gibberd, maker D. Burkle and Son Ltd

**6** CHANDELIERS, designer Frederick Gibberd, maker A. Arden & Co Ltd

**8** 'SPRINGBOK' TUB CHAIR, designer A. J. Milne, maker E. Horace Holme Ltd, GREEN HIDE by Connolly Bros. OCCASIONAL TABLES, designer Philip Pound, maker Conran Furniture Ltd. CARPET, designer Frederick Gibberd, maker James Templeton & Co Ltd (also 10, 11 and 13)

**9** EASY CHAIR, designer Peter Taylor, maker L. W. Collyer of Kettering. SEAT FABRIC 'Stratford' designer Tibor Reich, maker Tibor Ltd

**10** 'FESTIVAL' EASY CHAIR, designers Roger and Robert Nicholson, maker Ideal Upholstery Ltd; CHAIR FABRIC 'Angeuna', designer Tibor Reich, maker Tibor Ltd. COFFEE TABLES, Heal & Son Ltd

**11** BAR STOOL, designer A. J. Stiff for Primavera Ltd

**12** DOOR HANDLES, designer Frederick Gibberd, maker James Gibbons & Co Ltd (cover picture)

**13** DINING CHAIRS, designer R. L. Carter, maker Gordon Russell Ltd; UPHOLSTERY WOOL REPP, maker British Replin Ltd. DINING TABLES, designer Frederick Gibberd, maker Ministry of Works. SERVING TABLES, designer Roger Clynes, maker Hille of London Ltd

**14** CASH DESK, designer Roger Clynes, maker Hille of London Ltd

**16** CONVEYOR BELTS, maker South Ltd. CONTROL PANEL, maker Watford Electric Co Ltd

**17** TUB CHAIR 682, designer Robin Day, maker Hille of London Ltd

OCCASIONAL TABLES, designer Frederick Gibberd, maker, D. Burkle and Son Ltd

WALLPAPER 'Gyro', designer June Lyon, maker, John Line and Son Ltd

**18** WALL SEATING, designer Frederick Gibberd, maker Hille of London Ltd

*Design: Number 79*

# The progress of packaging

Norbert Dutton

IT WAS IN THE EARLY 'THIRTIES that designers of calibre first discovered in packaging a new and promising field of activity. They demonstrated its possibilities by selecting some venerable packages and subjecting them to a drastic course of 'face lifting'. An easy favourite was the carton for Player's Navy Cut cigarettes, clearly ripe for modernisation and reputedly printed in 14 colours; but almost any pack was found eligible for treatment on which the proprietors had spent considerable sums over a long period in making it familiar to the public. Manufacturers reacted sharply to this shock therapy, but not in the desired direction; and package design remained for some years a theoretical, rather than a practical activity.

But the pioneers were not discouraged, and perseverance brought occasional success. A range of cosmetic packs was drastically restyled, and the sales increased in one month by one and three-quarter million units. Chocolates,



*Wine labels. W. & A. Gilbey Ltd; designed by Milner Gray of Design Research Unit.*

sold in a box of funereal aspect and alarming simplicity, became a best-seller. On the grocers' shelves canned fruit and soap flakes began, diffidently at first but with increasing assurance, to compete for the customer's attention.

The recipe for success in those days was engagingly simple. It consisted merely in removing from the package everything that the proprietor had included, and restoring, under protest, only what was absolutely necessary for its identification. Gold medals, pictures of the factory, the chairman's signature, the guarantee of purity (in legal script, with seal appended) were ruthlessly eliminated, and with them the shabby anonymity that rendered every product indistinguishable. The package was well described as 'a miniature poster in three dimensions', and its visual function recognised as *brand identification*.

### Limits of simplicity

During the war, restricted supplies imposed many changes in packaging techniques and materials, with consequent changes in appearance. Because the demand for packaged goods exceeded the supply, these changes effected no reduction in sales, and so paved the way for a less conservative attitude among manufacturers with the return of normal conditions. Since the war, package design has become not merely respectable, but a factor of admitted and major importance in the marketing of consumer goods.

The extreme simplification practised by the pioneers of package design was a reaction from the cluttered complexity of the conventional packs of 20 years ago. Sans serif type, imposed on large areas of unbroken colour, achieved immediate distinction in contrast to its surroundings; but it was always apparent that what may be called the 'aseptic approach' would suffer eventually from the law of diminishing returns. As more and more designs are simplified, the simple design becomes progressively less conspicuous, and it seems probable that the process has now been carried to its limits. Certainly the last two or three years have witnessed a return towards decoration, concurrently with a parallel tendency in interior design.

It is no longer, however, the meaningless stock-in-trade of bands and garlands with which the printer's artist sought to break up the surface and so camouflage uneven inking and bad register, applying it impartially to every job. To



LEFT Romary & Co Ltd; designed by Kenneth Rowntree.

*The swing of the pendulum: packaging returns to decorative richness and complexity. The gold medals have disappeared: the Royal Arms remain, though handled now with appropriate formality. As the Gilbey labels demonstrate, packaging provides an admirable medium for heraldic treatment and—in the hands of an outstanding designer—for inexhaustible calligraphic subtleties. The Romary labels, using a mixture of nineteenth-century typefaces, clearly create a period character.*

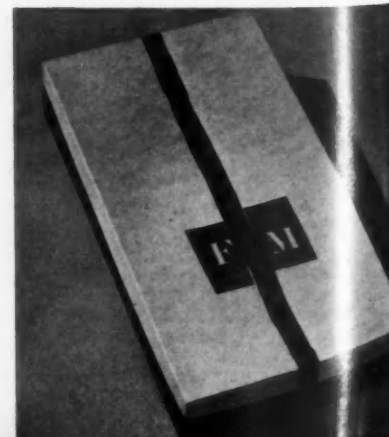
RIGHT W. & A. Gilbey Ltd; designed by Moler Gray of Design Research Unit.

RIGHT Bentalls Ltd; designed by Peter Ray for Colman, Prentis & Varley Ltd.

*Department stores are recognising the value of a house style, both for their proprietary lines and for miscellaneous wrappings. Distinctive typography and a highly individual decorative treatment can establish an unmistakable association between packages which may vary widely in shape, size and material. A well designed outer wrapping compels every customer to carry the company's advertisement through the streets.*



RIGHT Fortmagn & Mason Ltd; designed by Ruth Gill for Colman, Prentis & Varley Ltd.





the contemporary designer brand identification remains the fundamental problem, and he finds in decoration a means to this end no less emphatic than unadorned typography, but offering far greater opportunities for the creation of atmosphere and visual interest. It is not simply the legibility of the brand name by which a pack is recognised, but its whole visual aspect: a successful design can be identified at a glance, in less time than it takes to decipher a word.

### 'Family resemblance'

There is of course no single formula for the design of a package. The problems are many and various, and each demands a specially tailored solution. The most rewarding assignment from the point of view of design is the planning of a range of products marketed by one company. Their common origin is implied by the imposition of a design formula, while minor variations in colour and arrangement characterise the individual products. The degree of variation introduced will, of course, depend on the size and the complexity of the range. This formula is known to designers as a 'family resemblance', or house style, and its possibilities have been frequently and successfully exploited, most recently by department stores for their wrapping-paper and proprietary lines.

It can be safely asserted that no problem in package design is as simple as it may appear at first sight. No responsible designer will commit himself to recommendations without a study of the market at which the product is aimed, and a detailed examination of the packaging of competitive products. The method of production, too, will often impose particular limitations with which the designer must be familiar. The creation of a successful package involves a great deal more than mere surface decoration; and the leading consultants command high fees because they have been consistently able to demonstrate the value of qualified advice. The way to save money in packaging is in production, where large economies can be effected by skilful planning, and not on design, which represents a relatively small and non-recurring charge.

Nowhere is experienced advice more necessary than on the modernisation of an established product. It would be irresponsible to impair the identity of any product that commands a substantial market, and the manufacturer's reluctance to risk doing so is easy to understand. Yet

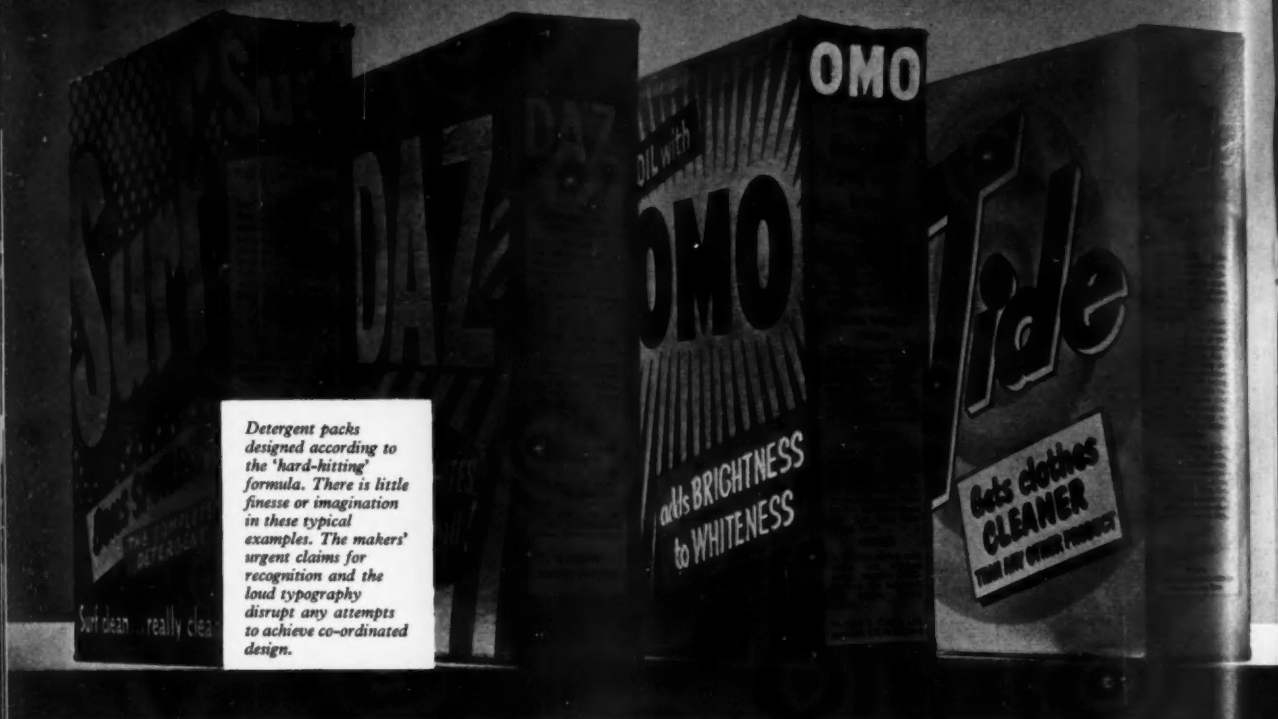


LEFT Hugon & Co Ltd (Atora); designed by Norbert Dutton.

*Modernisation can be achieved without loss of identity. When extraneous matter has been eliminated attention is focused on the essentials, which become more lucid and more conspicuous. The pack is conceived here as "a miniature poster in three dimensions".*



LEFT Cadbury Bros Ltd; designed by Norbert Dutton.



*Detergent packs designed according to the 'hard-hitting' formula. There is little finesse or imagination in these typical examples. The makers' urgent claims for recognition and the loud typography disrupt any attempts to achieve co-ordinated design.*

markets are not static: old customers die, and new ones grow up; there comes a point at which the old-fashioned product begins to lose ground to its up-to-date competitors, and a degree of modernisation becomes imperative.

### Continuity with change

In competent hands this process can be perfectly safe and practically painless. It is a widespread illusion among manufacturers that the public is as familiar with the appearance of their products as they are themselves and will instantly detect the most insignificant alteration. In practice, provided that the essential character is preserved, minor adjustments will as a rule pass unnoticed, or will at any rate not provoke either comment or reaction. By a series of such adjustments, carried out over a period of time, the whole aspect of a pack may be changed without at any point incurring a break in continuity.

Indeed, if the essentials of a design are emphasised and the extraneous material omitted, its individuality, so far from being impaired, is enhanced. Many old-established products, whose packs date from a cluttered and uninspired period and have been pre-

served unchanged, could benefit substantially from such treatment.

Tradition is not always, of course, a factor in package design. New products are continually entering the market, and here the designer enjoys some unrestricted freedom, subject, however, to certain principles which are widely held to be inviolable. It is believed, for example, that practically all canned foodstuffs must be illustrated on the label in full colour in order to overcome the housewife's scepticism as to the contents. This idea is rejected by one or two of the largest canners, who rely instead on their familiar, though not particularly distinctive, arrangements of lettering; but for a new product it is generally considered imperative. Like the trend towards simplicity, it is suffering from the law of diminishing returns, and we may expect some more adventurous treatments in this field.

Among the most uninhibited of packs are those for detergents and breakfast cereals. Detergent cartons are universally designed in an idiom known for some reason as 'hard-hitting': a lack of finesse is perhaps appropriate, but they seem also rather to lack imagination. The name appears as a rule in 'three-dimensional' letters, usually set at an angle or in perspective.





Some of the many ways of decorating the backs of cereal packs are shown here. Although they fulfil the very special need of the breakfast table, the general run of designs appears to be overshadowed by the recent Quaker cartons, far right, designed by F. H. K. Henrion.

Urgent claims appear in strips or panels superimposed on the design, also at various angles; the general effect is one of restless disturbance, doubtless intended to symbolise the dynamic nature of the contents.

Cereal cartons, on the other hand, are prodigal of ideas. Cornflakes, being light in weight and bulky, present a large surface area to the onlooker; and being consumed regularly, and so purchased frequently, provide ample scope for inventiveness. The material appears to be devised by advertising agencies, which are naturally predisposed to filling large spaces at frequent intervals. ("Delicious heart-of-the-corn, fresh-from-the-oven flakes sparkled and spangled with sugar for a can't-be-resisted flavour.")

The backs of cereal cartons have been devoted to children's games, cut-outs, cardboard masks and in one instance (with unaccountable restraint) coloured pictures of locomotives and racing cars. The subject matter is changed frequently to encourage the collection of sets – an up-to-date counterpart of the cigarette cards of our pre-war childhood. This technique is unlikely to be extended to other commodities, since the conditions of large size and frequent replacement are peculiar to this group of products.

## Packing for self-service

A sharper reaction to the growing number of self-service stores might have been expected from the packers of groceries. In the United States they have practically eliminated the assistant behind the counter; now that everything is pre-packed, there is nothing left for him to weigh or wrap. (Americans, with characteristic enthusiasm for a coined word, however repellent, call them 'grocerias' or super-markets.) The trend towards self-service, since it is both economical and logical, may be expected to progress, but few manufacturers here have yet felt it necessary to modify their packaging practice.

The shop assistant is familiar with the merchandise he handles, and can recognise any required brand or grade at a glance, often by its accidental characteristics; the shopper, on the other hand, requires that information should be explicit and legible. Brand, grade and price should be clearly displayed: a lucid description takes precedence over all other considerations. To achieve this, and at the same time effect unmistakable and conspicuous brand identification, will be the coming problem for the designer.

Packaging in a modern idiom has become largely



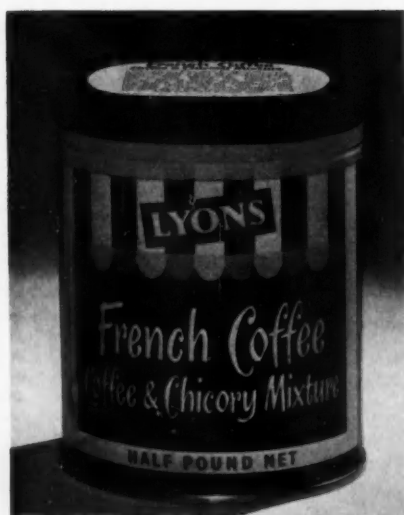
ABOVE Cravens Ltd; designed by J. Edward Sander.



ABOVE Payne & Co Ltd; designed by F. H. K. Henrion.



ABOVE Clayton Bros; designed by W. M. de Majo.



ABOVE J. Lyons & Co Ltd; designed by Kathleen Darby.

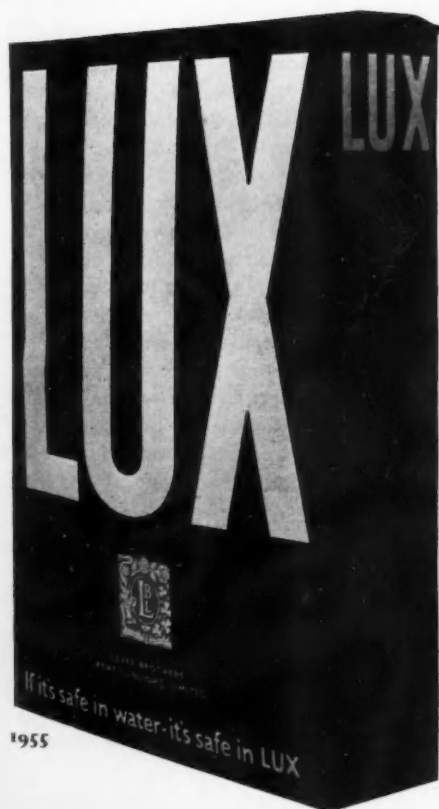
Sweets and beverages were among the earliest products to benefit from better packaging. The Paymes cartons are richly decorative yet appropriately light-hearted; that for Cravens, in a delicate pink, harmonises with the contents which are visible through a film 'window'. The demise of the soft drinks industry and a return to proprietary brands stimulated a flow of new designs, of which the Clayton's range is a typical example. Changes in colour distinguish the various items, and as in every related range, the repetition of a conspicuous motif in different colours promotes mass display. The coffee tin, while proclaiming the manufacturer's identity, contrives to suggest a Continental atmosphere.



RIGHT An ingenious design in which the single carton becomes an element in a repeating pattern, and so encourages mass display. J. Sainsbury; designed by Leonard Beaumont.

accepted in an increasing number of industries, particularly for food products, confectionery, soft drinks, detergents, toilet goods and cosmetics. That there is still great scope for improvement the briefest shopping tour will demonstrate but on the whole the resistance of these industries to the idea of change and modernisation may be said to have been overcome. Other industries, however, notably the tobacco and wine trades, remain resolutely conservative. This is certainly not because they cannot afford the cost of new designs, as is proved by their expenditure on outdoor and press advertising; one must conclude that they actually prefer, or believe the public to prefer, the tradition of characterless mediocrity so clearly originating in the speculative 'designs' of the printer's studio.

Milner Gray's distinguished work for W. & A. Gilbey Ltd is therefore welcome, not only for its intrinsic interest, but as a demonstration of the 'timeless' quality of good design. Richly decorative yet executed with a formal restraint, these wine labels reflect the experience and skill that go into the making of the product, and dispose effectively of the idea that good packaging is a mere adjunct to the promotion of cheap and competitive merchandise.



1955



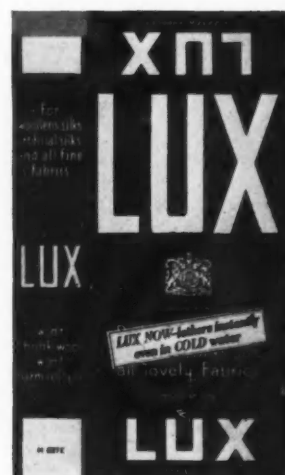
1905



1925



1929



1935



1948



1949



## Space for decoration\*

### A REJOINDER by Reyner Banham

DESIGN is to be congratulated on having brought into the open so important a subject as the status of ornament in machine products, but it is a pity that an article supported by such apt illustrations should have so narrowly failed to grasp the essentials of the situation. The failure seems to lie in a misplaced desire for unity at a time when diversity and differentiation of product-aesthetics seem to offer the most exciting rewards in the field of design since the Bauhaus.

The hinging of Mr Blake's argument on the problem of space concepts was extremely perceptive – but it is symptomatic of our present situation that our space concepts have become extremely diverse. The space of cubism and its heirs is a distillation of a quality which runs through the whole tradition of Western art, and it is thus time-bound, as well as essentially rectangular, three-dimensional and limited – it is space between flat planes. But the space of science and science fiction is a product of a break in the scientific tradition at the beginning of this century, and is thus new, as well as essentially curved, poly-dimensional and limitless – the space beyond spheres.

The space concepts of the fine arts, like the rest of fine art aesthetics, derive from a time when objects of art and objects of utility were all handicraft produced, singly or in short runs. Both classes of objects were intended to endure, and shared a common language of ornament, space concepts and proportion. These were the aesthetics of perennity. But while the art-work is still essentially unique and hand made, the equipment of our daily lives is now serially produced by machines, no longer hard won and expected to endure. Le Corbusier saw, in the very early 'twenties, that the aesthetics of perennity do not run for products which are technically obsolete in a year, and he wondered if they ran even for Eiffel's Pont de Garabit, which would not be obsolete for a century. He saw, as

*The obvious contrast in the manner of designing General Motors' Research Centre, right, and General Motors' 'El Camino' Cadillac, left, are taken by Reyner Banham to epitomise the contrast between the aesthetics of 'perennity' and those of 'expendability' – the building severe, restrained and rectangular, making its effects by subtle abstract relationships to be contemplated and enjoyed as long as it stands, the car equally properly, he suggests, staking everything on immediate impact and short-term effect because it will be obsolete in three or four years.*

Adolf Loos seems to have seen, and as Ruskin and Morris apparently failed to see, that to stretch a single aesthetic standard over expendable and perennial products indifferently was a short cut to the neurotics' ward.

The aesthetics of perennity are for permanent structures, built for life or posterity – buildings, paintings, symphonies or marriages – but for producing consumable goods like automobiles, movies, cream buns, or holiday *affaires*, we need an aesthetic of expendability. This cannot be an aesthetic which depends upon the discovery and contemplation of subtle abstract relationships – there isn't time – but must deal with a language of signs which are as immediately recognisable and legible as a dropped neckline or a raised eyebrow. The aesthetics of serial production must be the aesthetics of the popular arts, not of fine arts, and that is why the American automobile speaks a language of space concepts which belongs to science fiction and not to cubism. To apply durable and time-bound aesthetic procedures to consumable and non-traditional products can only cheapen those procedures and – as in so much Victorian design – debases the fine arts without benefiting the expendable arts.

The single aesthetic standard which we can identify in each of the great cultures of the past cannot be looked for today, and any attempt to force such a standard on both durable and expendable products will only produce mishaps like the Studebaker, where the designer, having improperly angled his aesthetic for perennity, produced a design which was weak in the first instance, and has become more of a crack-backed compromise with each successive annual modification in styling – the kind of changes by which most American automobile designs are enhanced, not spoiled.

Mr Blake's animadversion to the scrapheap is

\* DESIGN May pages 9-23.



entirely just, but for the wrong reason. Technical obsolescence will have most American cars on the scrapheap of the stock car circuits in ten years, and if their designs have not become aesthetically dead in the same term, then their designers are guilty of misusing durable aesthetics in places where they are not required. A great deal now depends, therefore, on the ability of design critics to master the workings of the popular-art vocabulary which constitutes the aesthetics of expendability, and to see what its basic rules are. Instant legibility is one, and another is integration with the technical future of the product. However fantastic its form, the ornament of the automobile must derive from the business of automobilism; to take a much misunderstood example, tail fins may be only an eye-catcher on this year's dream cars, but may be an aerodynamic necessity on the production cars of two years hence if power outputs continue to rise. And don't forget that the automobile is more than just a means of transport – it is a badge of rank, and the

common man's toe-hold on the marvels of technology – and the iconography of its ornament must be able to say all of these things.

The solution to Mr Blake's dilemma is to accept, exploit and enjoy the fact that we no longer have to trim ourselves to fit a single procrustean aesthetic. From now on, and as long as serial production lasts, there will be two aesthetics, one for the fine arts, one for consumer goods. This is not cynicism or 'letting-go-of-standards', the survival of either aesthetic depends upon their differentiation. One great organisation has already recognised this fact and exploited it. The Cadillac 'El Camino', all bulge and bluster, pride and power, a masterpiece of the aesthetics of expendability, is a product of that same General Motors Company which commissioned Saarinen to design the buildings of its Research Centre, calm and lucid rectangles that breathe the very essence of the aesthetics of perennity. A word from General Motors is always *verb sap*.

### Mr Blake comments :

MR BANHAM'S ARGUMENT APPEARS convincing, but surely it is in reality a convenient over-simplification. Firstly, there is a whole range of products between those designed for the extremes of "perennity" and "expendability". A car may be intended to be scrapped in ten years (it will and does in fact last much longer), a cooker or a washing-machine will normally last 15, a clock may last 20, a chair or a table 25, a train 30, a building 50 and more. Where are we to draw the line? Clearly nowhere, for 'borax' styles exist in all of them and to suggest that the "aesthetic of expendability" can be identified with the "popular arts" is therefore misleading.

Secondly, my suggestion of an all-embracing space concept did not imply a unity of appearance in things so different as architecture and machine products. Indeed, my aim was to point out the diversity of expression within this single theme. My plea was for a unity in each individual product and for an approach to design which respected the relationship between applied ornament and the basic form. The new Ford 'Anglia' and, I still maintain, the 1953 Studebaker are proof enough that serial-produced articles can be sensitive in shape and refined in detailing and decoration – and still have immediate appeal. Add a mass of symbolic ornament and they will not look much different from the Cadillac shown on these pages. It has already happened with the Studebaker and can hardly fail to happen with the Ford.

Thirdly, the difference between products intended to last a lifetime and those intended for short-term use would seem to be more a matter of quality than of design. Thus exhibition architecture and permanent building have very similar characteristics today, the main differences being in the durability of the materials used. Similarly, expensive hand-made cars (Jensen, Bristol, Aston-Martin) do not differ fundamentally in appearance from the mass-produced article.

Fourthly, a small point perhaps, but Mr Banham suggests that design for "perennity" is expressed in shapes that are essentially rectangular, that of "expendability" (of science and science fiction) are curved. This may once have been the case but is it so now? The shapes being developed for supersonic travel are far more angular than those for subsonic speeds. The curve of the aerofoil section is a pre-war phenomenon – compare the 'Spitfire' (conceived in 1934) with the new 'P 1' fighter or the many types of rocket missiles. This has already influenced and will no doubt further influence product design in a variety of fields. The point is that it can either be done well or badly. For the discriminating designer, whose outlook is not unimportant in this matter, Mr Banham's thesis must appear to be a depressing acceptance of the more vulgar manifestations of machine art, the sops offered by commercialism to greater sales.







## A NEW BRITISH TYPEWRITER

**L. Bruce Archer**

A NEW BRITISH-DESIGNED typewriter has just been launched. Such an event is of very rare occurrence. Since 1873, when that far-sighted American business man, James Densmore, managed to persuade E. Remington & Sons, the small-arms and sewing-machine makers, to undertake the manufacture of 1,000 of Christopher Latham Sholes's recently perfected writing-machines, the design and manufacture of typewriters has remained overwhelmingly in American hands. Most of the numerous typewriter companies subsequently incorporated in Great Britain have been of United States origin, a notable exception being the Imperial Typewriter Company formed in 1908. Indeed, the design of almost all the world's typewriters has been based on copies of American inventions mainly at the Remington and Underwood Co's.

1 In 1873 this experimental prototype was perfected by Sholes and his associates after six years of work or 30 different models. Although almost every feature of the design can be found in the work of earlier inventors, this was the first machine which proved to be commercially exploitable. (Photograph courtesy Remington Rand Ltd.)

2 The 'Underwood No 1' of 1897 with its fully visible writing, sub-lever movement with accelerated motion, over-throw carriage escapement, tabulator and other features, created a formula which ever since has been more or less closely followed by manufacturers of standard office machines all over the world. (Reproduced from 'The History and Development of Typewriters', H M S O.)

In 1939 American manufacturers were supplying in the region of 90 per cent of Europe's typewriters. The drying up of this trade due to the post-war restrictions on dollar imports has therefore left a huge unsatisfied demand which has stimulated the development of indigenous supplies. The latest European design, by Byron Business Machines, commands attention for a variety of reasons. It is new, not only in general appearance, but also in important mechanical principles. It is the product of new men in a new firm. It is claimed to be all-British in conception and execution.

In its extreme form this claim is impossible to substantiate but difficult to refute. The typewriter world is one in which patents, designs, personnel and capital are licensed, copied, sub-let and inter-invested to an extent which completely baffles the outside observer. Byron itself attaches its name to machines which are made abroad and which appear to be absolutely identical with others also sold here under different manufacturers' names. The broader claim is therefore best left unsupported.

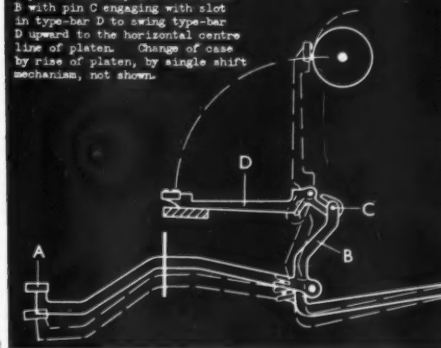
## New men at the top

Byron Business Machines is descended from the Barlock Company which was registered in England in 1925, but which took its inspiration on licence from the Columbia Typewriter Manufacturing Company of Newport, U S A. Columbia had made the first 'Barlock' in 1889. Today, however, the link is no more than historical. The ownership of the old Barlock Company recently changed hands and when it was reborn as Byron Business Machines in 1953 the re-organisation left few survivors. The new men are almost all under 40 years of age and are keen to make a completely fresh start.

The new Byron is a comprehensive product for the more expensive end of the current range of office machines. It is hoped that it will capture a corner in the United States domestic market where

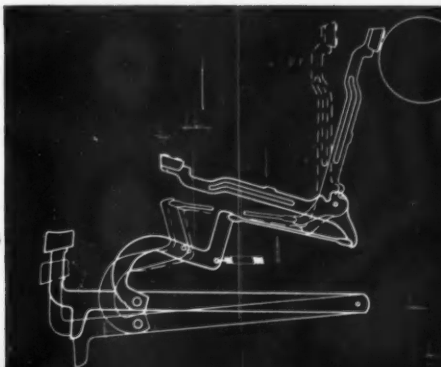


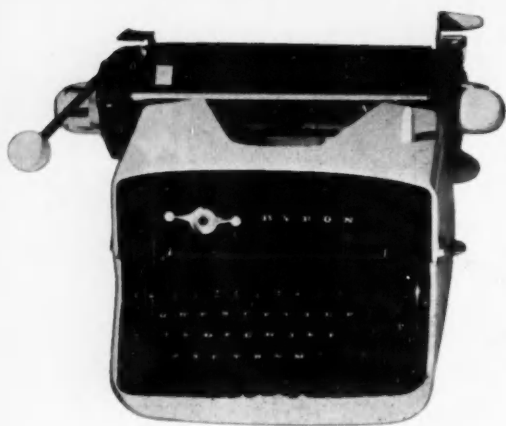
Depression of key A causes lever B with pin C engaging with slot in type-bar D to swing type-bar D upward to the horizontal centre line of platen. Change of case by rise of platen, by single shift mechanism, not shown.



3 This schematic diagram, based on the Underwood, shows the type of key-lever mechanism which has been so widely adopted. (Reproduced from 'The History and Development of Typewriters', HMSO.)

4 The new Byron key-lever mechanism incorporates a curved sub-lever, pivoted at the bottom to the finger-key lever and linked at the top to the type bar. As the lower end of the sub-lever is pulled downwards by the long finger-key lever, the curved edge rolls past the small fixed roller and thus gives the upper end of the sub-lever an accelerated hick in the horizontal direction. The last  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch of travel of the type block is overthrow which takes place after the finger-key has reached its fully depressed position.





*The first prototype for the Byron machine was adventurously styled and incorporated a number of innovations. It is perhaps a pity that so much of its freshness has been lost in the return to the more sedate design of the final version.*



*The balsa model for the second prototype shows a stage in the transition to the final version. The ball-ended line-space lever remains and novelty features have been made of the control buttons, but the casing has reverted to the monolithic form popular in other modern designs.*

higher production costs are tending to reverse the traditional import-export pattern.

On first acquaintance it is an impressive machine. Its massive appearance is mainly due to the provision of extra space within the casing for carbon ribbon mechanism and to allow for the introduction of a similar but electrified version of the machine at a later date. Herbert Norman James, the industrial designer who was called in as consultant, has evolved a pleasing form which is also attractive when seen from the viewpoint of a visitor waiting at the wrong side of the office desk. The boat-like curves of the base pan where it disappears from view beneath the machine and the keyboard surrounds are especially satisfying. The keyboard has been planned to make the most of the standard maximum of 46 keys, and all the modern devices which can be added to this type of machine have been included. Prominent amongst these and popular with those who have tried the machine, are the rapid-feed handle which loads the paper directly to the typing position, a lock and key, an eraser pencil, and a button to press when two keys have jammed.

### **'Flattering' controls**

The plurality of buttons has been carried a stage too far. At one side of the keyboard is a set of three buttons to control the ribbon colour change. To balance this on the other side there is another set of three buttons to control the closeness of the trans-

parent card clip to the platen. There is no more excuse for the use of three separate buttons to provide three mutually exclusive conditions such as "red-stencil-black" on a typewriter, than there is for four separate buttons marked "high-medium-low-off" controlling the hot-plate of an electric cooker. The recent deplorable tendency to incorporate such features in several types of appliance is apparently due to a desire to flatter the user by giving her the sensation of operating a complicated control desk that is incomprehensible to the humbler onlooker.

The main interest of the Byron, however, is beyond its keyboard. Most typewriter models are based on mechanisms evolved 50 or 60 years ago. In 1897 a design by Franz X. Wagner was manufactured as the 'Underwood No. 1', and established a formula which has been more or less closely followed in standard office machines ever since. The new Byron makes significant departures from this tradition by including a unique type-lever movement and a new carriage arrangement to make the writing fully visible. The patent applications name F. S. Hardy as the true and first inventor of this printing mechanism, but the complete design was carried into effect by Dennis Whitehead, who formerly assisted and later succeeded Mr Hardy as Byron's design and research engineer, with Mr James the design consultant in almost continual attendance.

On field test, the new Byron machine was well received by typists, but only protracted experience



*The second prototype in which the keyboard and casing reached their final forms, though the ball-ended line-space lever and the ball-like platen knobs remain. This was a very attractive machine and the bulk of the field tests were conducted on it.*



*In the latest version of the Byron the white balls have been replaced by a 'spade' handle and conventional platen knobs. The pastel colours have given way to a metallic blue-grey and black, which are less pleasing.*

will prove whether or not it rises to the great expectations of its authors. At least it shows a spirit of adventure which is all too rare. Let us hope that it may prove an effective counter to the German, Italian and Scandinavian machines which threaten to dominate the British home and export markets.

*The Byron typewriter is unusually attractive from the often neglected rear view. The five-pointed star knob is a line-space selector and the coin-slotted screw is a touch control. The large waffle-surfaced cellular rubber feet have a suction effect on the table surface, although at 40 lb the machine is not easily pushed around.*



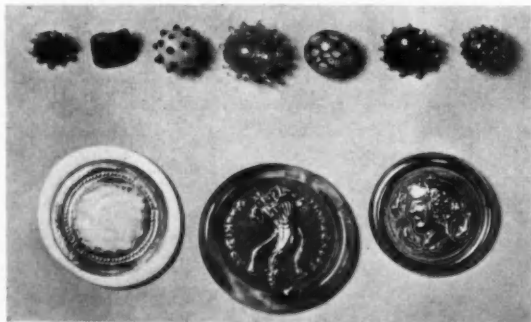
## ARTIST IN GLASS

POET OR CRAFTSMAN? F. Lampl, who died on March 5 and about whom a brief obituary appeared in *DESIGN* for May, page 46, followed both these callings. Born in 1892 in Vienna, he became a member of the group of romantic-revolutionary writers who flourished in Austria after the collapse of her Empire, and in addition to poetry he published a number of short stories and novels. Lampl was better known, however, for his 'Bimini' and 'Orplid' glass, and the work he did for these firms, both of which he founded (naming them after poems by Heine and Moerike), began after a visit as a young man to the glass factories near Venice. With the Viennese firm of Bimini, he devoted himself largely to the production of figures of humans and animals, and something of the fanciful delicacy of his workmanship can be seen in the accompanying illustration, 1.

The glass jewellery, 2, for his English firm of Orplid, which he started in 1938, continues the ornate precision of the earlier work, but it was in England that Lampl discovered another tradition, no less powerful than that of Venice – the restrained classical shapes of English glass and tableware. Henceforth he busied himself almost entirely with the production of glasses, which remained his principal interest, and he tried to evolve a modern style based on traditional shapes. The two right-hand glasses in 4, 'Melantho' and 'Pelias', and the three with ornamental 'barley sugar' stems show a wide variety of treatment, and seem to combine the essential virtues of originality and tradition, without both of which good design cannot exist.



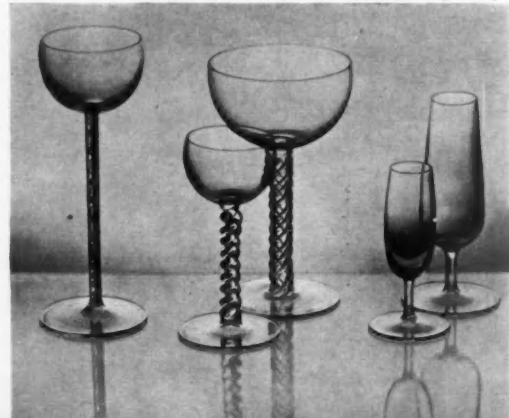
Glass jewellery: an innovation in England by Lampl for Orplid.



Examples of Lampl's famous 'smoke-ringed' glass for Orplid.



Virtuosity and simplicity in table glass by Lampl.





# FURNITURE *survey*

## *All-purpose chairs*

A. GARDNER-MEDWIN

*One of a series of articles on modern furniture selected from 'Design Review', the illustrated record of current British products to be seen at the London headquarters of the Council of Industrial Design.*

The following groups  
of furniture are included  
in the survey

Fully upholstered chairs MARCH  
Dining-tables and chairs APRIL  
Upholstered occasional chairs MAY  
Bedroom furniture . . . JUNE  
Storage units . . . . . AUGUST  
Occasional furniture . . . SEPTEMBER  
Outdoor furniture . . . . . OCTOBER  
Kitchen furniture . . . . . NOVEMBER

THE FURNITURE ILLUSTRATED includes chairs made from a variety of materials and designed for different purposes. Those intended primarily as dining chairs are not shown as they have been dealt with in a previous article in this series. With chairs for schools, restaurants, public halls and for use out of doors, the designer often has more freedom both with materials and shapes than with those intended for the private house, where tastes are more conventional. On the other hand, this type of furniture does sometimes find its way into the home and can be used there most successfully.

Although this country cannot offer the variety of laminated chairs



LEFT Occasional tub-chair with a hardwood frame, hand sprung and upholstered seat, back and arms. DESIGNER Laurence A. Reason. MAKER A. Reason & Sons Ltd.

that we find in Scandinavia because there has been less experimental work here with this method of manufacture, the 'Hillestak' and the 'Jason' chairs compare favourably with new designs from abroad, and both are exported in considerable quantities to many parts of the world. New methods of manufacture and new materials give such experimental chairs an originality of appearance which is likely to be accepted by the public provided the prices are competitive and the chairs do their job well. Trouble sometimes arises when plywood and metal chairs designed for mass-production are made in small quantities, for then they are likely to be expensive and may give rise to the impression that these modern materials

and methods are uneconomic. The demand for stacking chairs has resulted in new shapes and some successful examples are shown here.

Traditional materials, such as cane, are becoming popular again and are sometimes combined with more modern materials. Cane is hard-wearing and comfortable and can be used both functionally and decoratively in a variety of ways. Since the war there has probably been more experiment with the design of chairs than with any other type of furniture. Considerable study is now being given to seating postures and the results of such researches, combined with plastics and glass fibre in preformed shapes, should ensure some lively developments in the future.



LEFT Woven-fibre chair. DESIGNER Leslie W. Blackwell. MAKER A. Bacon & Son Ltd.

BELOW Chair using foam rubber on a laminated seat and back. DESIGNER Aidron Duckworth. MAKER H K Furniture Ltd.

RIGHT Low upholstered chair with head support. DESIGNER Ronald E. Long. MAKER R. S. Stevens Ltd.





LEFT 'Hillestak' chair with solid beech legs, laminated seat and back. DESIGNER Robin Day. MAKER S. Hille & Co Ltd.



BELOW LEFT Steel rod and moulded plywood chair with rubber upholstery. DESIGNER Robin Day. MAKER S. Hille & Co Ltd.



LEFT Swivel chair covered in black hide, with a mahogany base. DESIGNER Tom Lupton & John Morton. MAKER L.M. Furniture Ltd.



RIGHT Occasional chair with laminated bends for the arms, legs and back. DESIGNER G. A. Jenkins. MAKER E. Kahn & Co Ltd.



RIGHT Nursing chair with a sapele frame and a cane seat and back. DESIGNER Ward & Austin. MAKER E. Atkins Ltd.

BELOW *Chairs of malacca, sega and lapping cane.* DESIGNER F. H. Lang. MAKER G. W. Scott & Sons Ltd.



BELOW *Occasional chairs with a beech frame and a cane seat and back.* DESIGNER and MAKER Ian Henderson Ltd.



RIGHT *Chair with a preformed and moulded glass fibre seat and back on a metal base coated with P.V.C.* DESIGNER D. Wolfe. MAKER Story & Co Ltd.



ABOVE *'Jason' stacking chair with a beech frame and a beech plywood shell, natural finish.* DESIGNER Carl Jacobs. MAKER Kandya Ltd.



ABOVE *Rocking chair with a steel rod frame and mahogany arm rests.* DESIGNER Ernest Race. MAKER Ernest Race Ltd.





# Stand into stage set

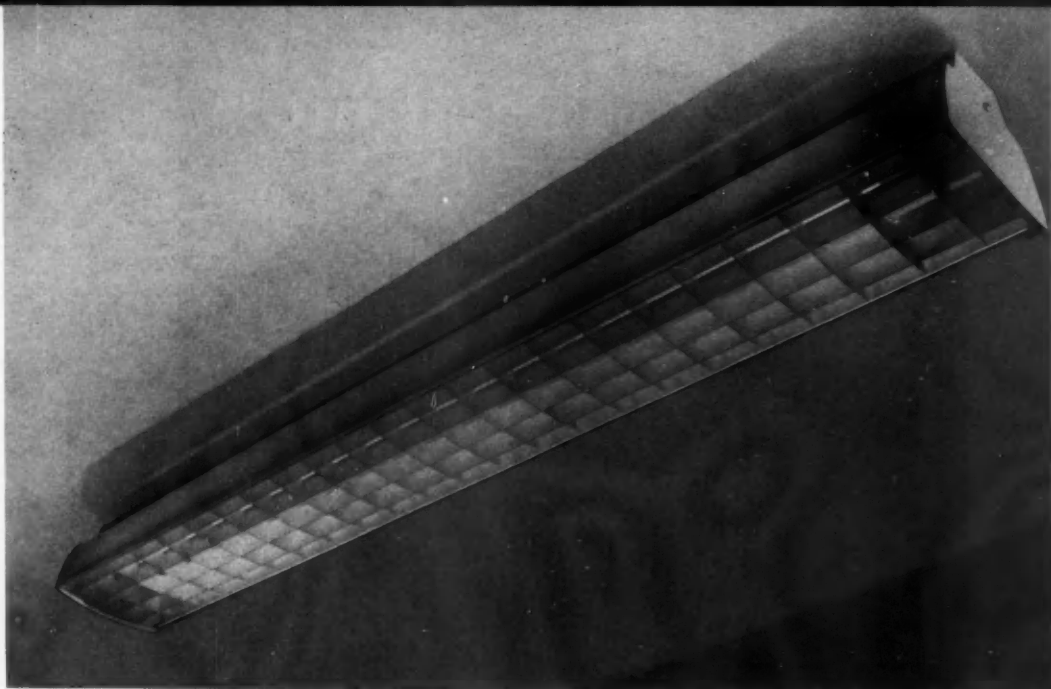


*'Backdrop' of bright fabrics behind the gallery on the British Celanese stand.*

*BELOW The stand seen from the gallery.*

WITH AN EFFECT that recalled, not surprisingly, the little planted patio by the Regatta Restaurant during the Festival of Britain, British Celanese Ltd launched its prestige display at the recent 'British Industries Fair'. Fabrics were exquisitely displayed at varying levels above a tame jungle of flowers, plants, pebbles and tree trunks. The side walls were boarded high enough to retain the full 'stage-set' effect until the visitor reached the entrance. Beyond the skeletal displays a curved gallery ran in front of the 'backdrop' of bright coloured fabrics, suspended over a pool. The designers were Misha Black and Alexander Gibson of D R U.





## FLUORESCENT LIGHTING Unit development

**John Gray**

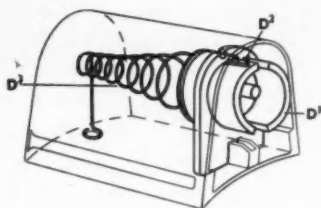
IN A NEW RANGE of fluorescent lighting fittings with interchangeable parts Crompton Parkinson Ltd (with Peter Bell as consultant working with the design team) has both achieved its principal object – of improving quality by standardisation without increasing price – and solved a number of aesthetic and functional problems in the design of fittings for institutions like schools, factories and offices.

The designs have been planned systematically for continuous production and include interesting features, such as a dovetailed channel section and two intricate die-cast end-plates, which can be justified economically only by manufacture on a large scale. The company is finding that complete interchangeability of parts is giving the range a wide appeal.

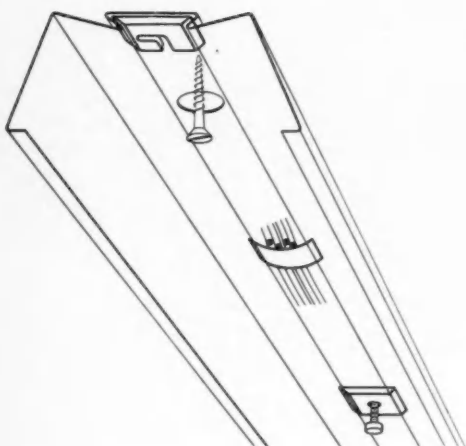
The new fittings offer clean lines and easy mainten-

ance. Holes, screwheads and other fixing devices have been reduced to the minimum, while slots for upward lighting (which have a habit of being ugly) are designed as spaces between the channel and side-reflectors and are barely noticeable. Removal of parts for cleaning and servicing has been much simplified, it being possible for an unskilled person to remove the complete set of attachments in a minute or less.





The lampholder, as shown here, is neat and simple in appearance. Contacts at both ends are sprung so that the lamp can be fixed with one hand by inserting it first at one end and then at the other. One end of the spring touches the lamp-cap; the other end is earthed by contact with one of the pre-set fixing screws, which engage in a keyhole slot on the channel and keep the plastic case of the lampholder in position.



An exploded version of the channel, showing how all components are fitted into the dovetailed centre section of the channel. Nearest the eye is one of two fixing devices which slide down the centre section to engage with wood screws when fixing close to the ceiling. Further down, the dovetailed section secures a plastic retention strip, which holds all wires in position. Finally, the sketch shows one of the slide-fixing pieces used to grip the control gear in place.

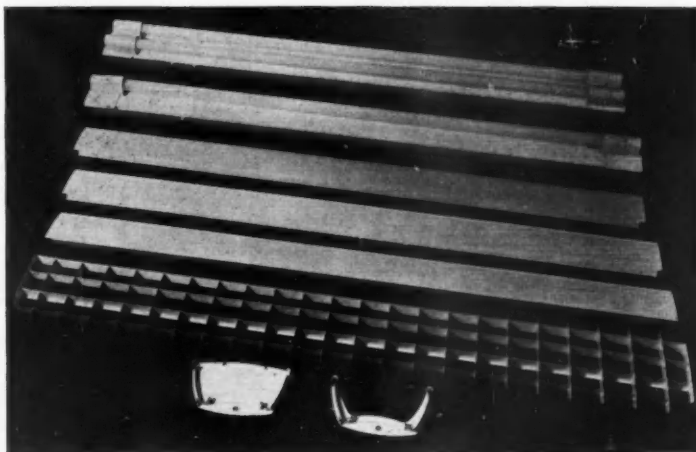
The lighting of wall displays is one of the many specialised functions to which the new range can be adapted. The reflector is omitted from the side facing the wall and on the opposite side a metal reflector is used, along with closed ends.

Eight separate components can be variously combined to produce 32 different lighting fittings, each finished in either vitreous enamel or a permanent stoved enamel.

General purpose fittings for two lamps and one respectively. ▶

Three alternative side-reflectors: metal with closed top; metal with open top (to throw light upwards); and translucent 'Perspex'. ▶

Industrial louvre (slightly curved) for use with closed ends; and two types of end plate, one closed and the other open. ▶

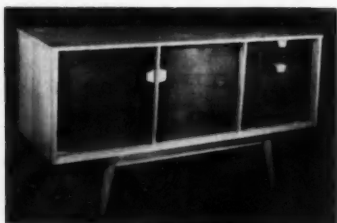


# Australian market report

Neville Ward recently visited Australia to supervise the erection of a stand designed by Ward & Austin for the Federation of British Carpet Manufacturers. The exhibit, below, shown at the Melbourne 'Ideal Home Show' was the first carpet promotion scheme of this type to be held in Australia and has proved so successful that the stand is to be rebuilt at the 'Furniture Mart' in Sydney from July 25-30. In the following note Mr Ward reports some of his impressions of current design standards gained during his stay in Australia.



Two examples of modern Australian design. The sideboard by the Fler Co shows a tendency in this firm's designs for simple architectural but perhaps over-sturdy shapes. The upholstered furniture designed and made by Grant Featherston makes use of plywood formed into freely curving shapes. This high-backed chair has a subtlety of form which makes it one of the more pleasing examples from this firm.



IN THE WINDOWS of Australia's large stores products unmistakably of the mid-twentieth century are making a confident fringe appearance beside hoary old favourites, and a number of smaller shops are able to support an exclusively contemporary range of designs. Young designers, often well travelled in Europe or America, seem to be busy, and while they complain that much of their most serious work is distorted in the operations between drawing-board and retail store there is evidence that a market for their work does exist. This market is helped in Australia, as elsewhere, by the glossy magazines which have, in recent years, found a mine of material in the 'contemporary style'.

A number of designers, unhappy about designer/management relation-

ships, take a more than normally active part in the production of their work, and this, whilst disruptive of a designer's essential activities, is a salutary exercise and does much to establish meticulous standards. Australia has in recent years suffered a number of alarming adverse trade balances and it seems clear that one of the most effective answers to this problem is an increase in home production of consumer goods. Quite apart from the effect of such developments on foreign industries which have enjoyed a carefree export market to Australia for many years, a matter of more than local interest is the sort of products which will emanate from the new and rapidly growing 'home' industries.

NEVILLE WARD



# Posters

## in the

## Louvre

Renè Elvin

AT THE PAVILLON DE MARSAN in the Louvre, where for 50 years antique textiles and *meubles de style* have been gathering dust, mainly for the benefit of elderly students of design, an exhibition was held this spring which, in its almost violent modernism, must have caused many shakings of grey beards and mutterings about what the world was coming to.

This was the display organised by the Alliance Graphique Internationale (A G I), an association comprising among its membership many of the world's leading graphic designers, under the title *Art et Publicité dans le Monde*. It comprised mainly posters, but had a fair sprinkling of packagings, labels, book jackets and magazine covers. Participating in it were some 70 artists from 11 countries: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, Italy, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States.

It might have been thought that posters, designed to arrest the inattention of the casual passer-by with striking, bold colours, would, in a confined space, form a horrible visual cacophony. In effect, this was



Tom Eckersley: England

not so, and the show was gay without being garish, bright but not dazzling.

The exhibiting A G I artists had evolved something like a common idiom which fully allowed for individual and national idiosyncrasies. This is not surprising, in view of the fact that the tasks facing them were all similar: to convince or at least persuade the casual observer by amusing or fascinating the eye – instantly.

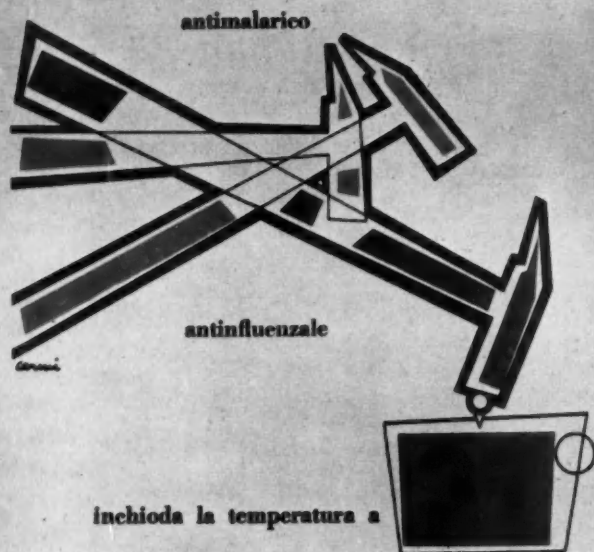
The Alliance Graphique Internationale was incorporated in November 1952, with offices at 86 rue Joffroy, Paris (17<sup>e</sup>). Many artists in

Western countries and even in far-away America and Japan, drawn by 'elective affinities', invited or co-opted, have joined the small initial nucleus.

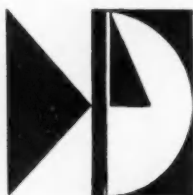
As at present constituted, the Chairman (*President d'Honneur*) is Jean Picart le Doux (France); the President, Jean Carlu (France); the Vice-Presidents, Fritz Bühler (Switzerland) and F. H. K. Henrion (Great Britain); the Secretary General, Jean Colin (France) and the Treasurer, Jacques Nathan (France).

The President of the British group is Ashley Havinden, and the British

# CHININO DI STATO



ABOVE *Eugenio Carmi: Italy*



RIGHT *Pierre Monnerat: Switzerland*

ABOVE *Hiroshi Ochi: Japan*



ABOVE *Hermann Eidenbenz: Germany*

BELOW *Jacques Richex: Belgium*



members include Tom Eckersley, Milner Gray, F. H. K. Henrion, George Him, Pat Keely, Jan Le Witt, Hans Schleger and Barnet Freedman.

While a large measure of visual harmony reigned among the exhibits, national characteristics were nevertheless easily perceptible. The French, for instance, showed in their designs two schools of thought, favouring either the broad humour traditional in the country of Rabelais and Molière, or the stylish grace and elegance no less traditional in a land where classicism is not a reproach but a virtue.

The British section exhibited many of the best known campaigns, including individual selections made by the artists from their work. The important Shell stand included a retrospective show of the work done for the company by many outstanding British and foreign designers, from the late E. McKnight Kauffer onwards.

One of the most characteristic sections was the Italian, showing an unexpected but quite distinct trend towards the abstract – a development doubtless due to the fact that many Italian advertisers are firms connected with engineering. These abstractions were, however, humanised by lively, striking colours.

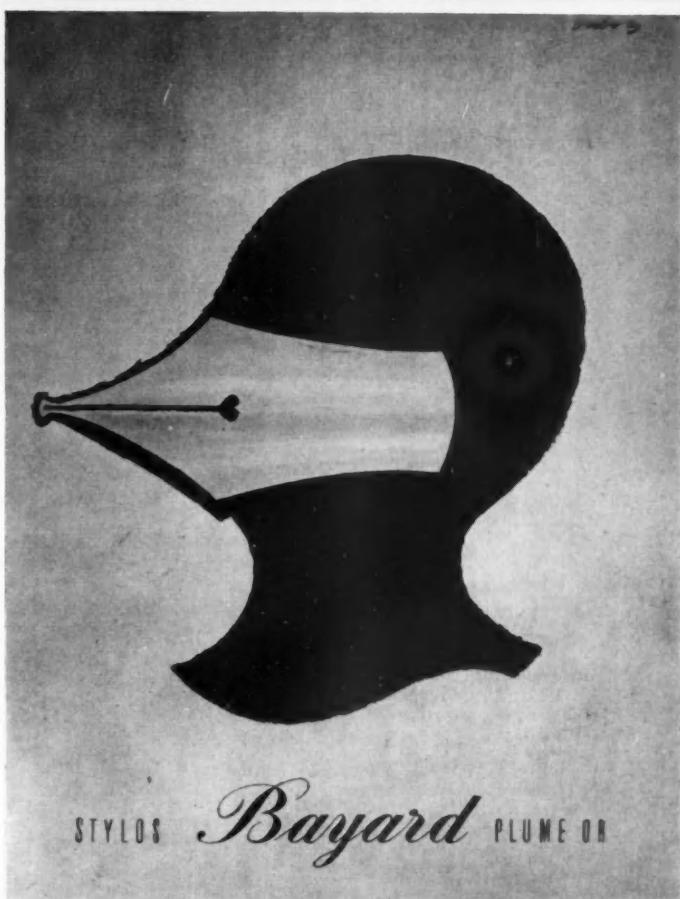


New to most visitors were the designs from the U S A and Japan. American advertising has long been considered elsewhere with mingled contempt and admiration for its slickness, size and indiscriminate use of 'sex appeal'. Latterly, as the exhibition showed, a bold modern outlook has rejuvenated American advertising - though not so much in the field of posters as in that of books, booklets and press advertisements.

The Japanese section had the quality expected from the country of Hokusai, Utamaro and Hiroshige. That glorious tradition, which influenced early poster designers in Europe, has been in turn submitted to the impact of the West. The result has been the formation of a graphic style that is often impressive and nearly always distinguished by charm and neatness.

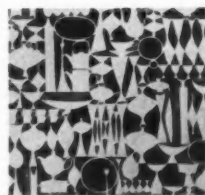
The high standard of Swiss graphic design, already well known from previous exhibitions, was once more demonstrated, as was that of the other smaller countries of Europe, including Scandinavia and the Low Countries.

The exhibition was an event of major importance in the field of the graphic arts applied to industry. It will be brought over to London next March, and should be something to look forward to.



ABOVE Jacques Dubois: France

LEFT Lester Beall: U S A



RIGHT Stig Lindberg: Sweden



ABOVE Ebbe Sadolin: Denmark

BELOW Wim Brusse: Holland



No air-moving appliance can be better than the most vital component: the air impeller. And no one has had more experience in the design and manufacture of air impellers than Torrington.

**THE TORRINGTON MANUFACTURING COMPANY**  
TORRINGTON, CONNECTICUT  
VAN NUYS, CALIFORNIA - OAKVILLE, ONTARIO

## IRELAND

## Starting point for design

MAEVE BARRINGTON

IN IRELAND, until recently, the value of industrial design has not so much been ignored as unrealised. Within the past few years, however, with the establishment of such government-sponsored organisations as the Arts Council, the Cultural Relations Committee, and the Dollar Export Promotion Board, a growing awareness of contemporary trends in design has been cultivated among manufacturers, designers and the public generally.

An instance of this was the holding of two exhibitions last year in Dublin. Their object was to stimulate public discrimination in the choice of household equipment and furnishings, and to give manufacturers a glimpse of foreign design. The first, organised by the Cultural Relations Committee, was a travelling exhibition of Finnish arts and crafts, and the second, presented by the Arts Council, illustrated the theme of 'International Design' and consisted of 300 exhibits from eight countries. The exhibits included furnishings, kitchen and factory equipment, and a large display of packaging and print design. An all-Irish exhibition of industrial design is also planned for the autumn of this year.

The 'International Design' exhibition was produced and mounted by the Design Research Unit of Ireland, a branch of DRU in London. As part of DRU's policy of bringing Irish designers into the unit, it recently appointed Thurloe Conolly, a painter, and designer of packaging

and textiles, as the organisation's senior designer executive in Dublin. This organisation will, it is hoped, be of use to Irish designers and help restore Ireland's tradition of design and craftsmanship. Before this can be achieved it will be necessary amongst other things to work out a satisfactory system of teaching design in the art schools. Even now most well designed goods in the shops have been imported, while many Irish products of comparable quality show a marked foreign influence.

Good Irish design does not, however, belong solely to the future. A few firms have produced distinctively Irish goods in a modern style, such as the furnishing fabrics marketed by John McGuire Ltd. The bedroom

suite also by John McGuire Ltd shows the first tentative, if not wholly successful, steps towards good modern design. A great impetus has been given to Irish design by Michael Scott's Bus Station in Dublin. Its white stone façade laced with mosaic-covered pillars and canopies makes an imposing twentieth-century contrast to Gandon's elegant Custom House near which it stands. On a smaller scale there is the bar interior designed by Hubert Banahan, whose bar stools are used here for the first time, with 'Pubwall' drapes by Patrick Scott from John McGuire's range of furnishing linens. Against this background the spidery lines of the Ernest Race chairs stand out effectively.



ABOVE Part of the International Design exhibition, presented by the Arts Council and mounted by Design Research Unit of Ireland. Shown here are American chairs designed by Charles Eames.

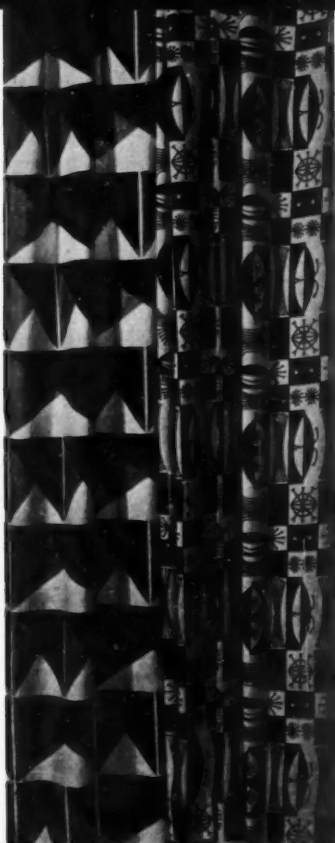


RIGHT Though somewhat awkward in proportion this bedroom suite, designed by John McGuire, shows the beginning of a modern approach to furniture design in Ireland.

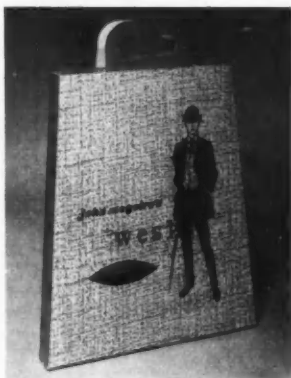
BELOW The Dublin bus station, one of the few modern buildings in Ireland, has given an impetus to the development of good design. The architect was Michael Scott.



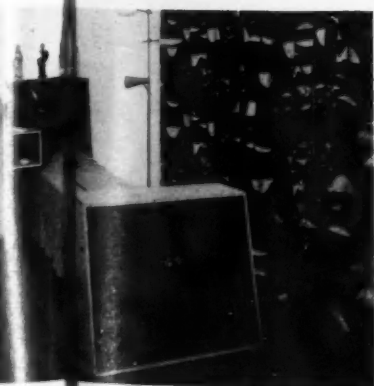
RIGHT These fabrics are from a range of eight screen-printed Irish linen furnishing fabrics designed by four Dublin painters for John McGuire Ltd. To a large extent they were designed to appeal to markets in the USA and there is a strong American influence in their bold and colourful abstract patterns. Left, 'Irish Pubwall' designed by Patrick Scott, and right, 'Signum' designed by Thurloe Conolly.



RIGHT It is perhaps no accident that one of the first essays in modern design in Ireland should be devoted to a bar interior. Shown here is 'The Punchbowl' at Brotenstown, designed by Hubert P. Banahan with 'Race' chairs and John McGuire fabrics.



ABOVE All the stationery and publicity material issued by John McGuire Ltd is of the same high standard as this pack for a waistcoat, designed by Kenneth Lamble of Design Research Unit. The pack was one of the award winners in the recent British 'Paper Box and Carton Design Contest'.



LEFT These bar stools were designed specially for the 'Punchbowl' by Hubert P. Banahan. The black steel rod framework, with parcel rack, and the 'Tygan'-covered seat and back are smart and appropriate though the over large ball feet are an unhappy concession to a fashion which has already passed.



# ITALY

## Physiological ceramics



*Gio Ponti, the designer of the following examples of sanitary ware made by Ideal-Standard, Milan.*

"Not an architectural form but a physiological form." These words by the designer Gio Ponti sound rather grandiloquent when applied to so strictly utilitarian an object as a W C, but they do at least show the high sense of purpose with which he set about his task. For in the lavatory, above all, there is scope for good

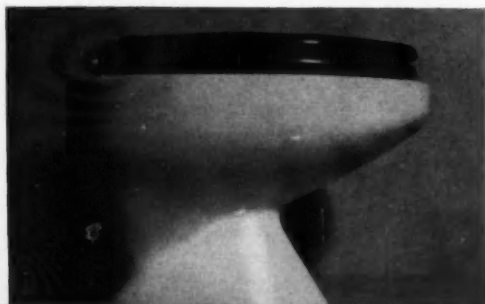
design. We all know of houses where lavatory walls are decorated with lively sporting scenes, or enlivened with a complete set of the Kings of England from William the Conqueror to Edward VII. This W C seeks to embellish its surroundings in a more economical way, and its finely sculptured shape is also remarkable for the way the waste pipe is concealed within the base of the pan. Useless curves and rims are removed, and the result is as simple as such an article should be.

Less simple are the Italian words of praise sometimes lavished on these products. In one example, these W Cs are said to have escaped from "traditional and stylistic suggestions that are academic and cultural". In more concrete language we can add that all the models in this series are in vitreous china, though some of the brassware designed by Gio Ponti is not yet on the market. Signor Ponti worked out the designs for both the W C and the wash basin on a drawing board and then supervised their execution by the firm's craftsmen.

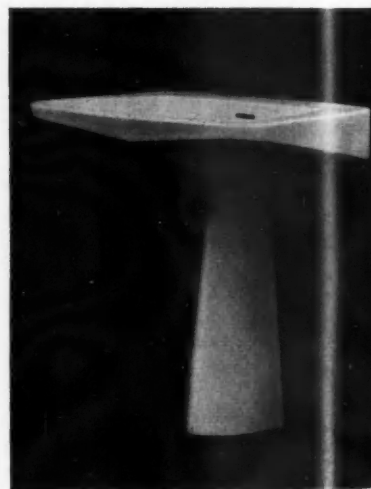
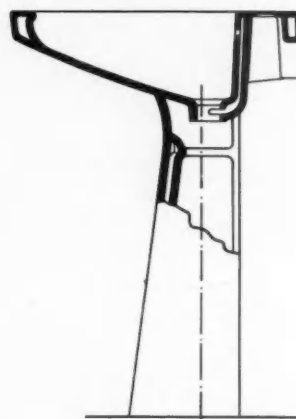
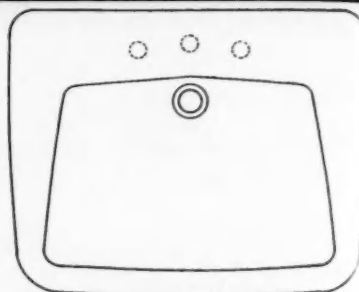
Material supplied by LETIZIA PONTI



*The shape of the basin is that of a trapezoid in which two of the four sides do not run parallel to one another. There is no hollow rim which makes cleaning easier. The vertical column is intended as a cover for the pipes and provides no support for the basin, which is fixed to the wall on brackets.*



*Emphasis on care of cleaning is again found in Gio Ponti's W Cs, where waste pipes are enclosed so that the problem of brushing and dusting the rear parts is simplified. A new system of flushing has been incorporated in the pans to ensure absolute efficiency.*



## Miscellaneous designs

Energy, inventiveness and a desire to break with tradition are characteristics of many modern Italian productions. Perhaps the oppressive weight of artistic achievement in the past, which in Italy is felt more than elsewhere, is partly responsible for this determination to seek new solutions to old problems. Each of the articles reproduced here shows originality in form, while the car, the clocks and the lamps are also remarkable for their technical innovations. During this month there will be an opportunity to see some further examples of Italian design at a small exhibition in the premises of the Italian Institute, 39 Belgrave Square. The exhibition which is on show until July 30 was opened by Sir Gordon Russell, Director of the CoID.



▲ The Fiat 'La Seicento' follows the practice of earlier small cars by the same firm having a rear engine with a luggage boot at the front. This allows the seating to be more easily arranged between the short wheel base. But the inclusion of a false radiator grille (not shown here) is an unnecessary concession to common practice and shows a surprising lack of imagination in a car which has many virtues. Particularly successful, however, are the general lines and feeling for scale in so small a car.



▲ The free forms of this pottery by Richard Ginori show a characteristic trend in new Italian design. The shapes are firm and solid and appear to allow ample room for a comfortable grip when in use.



▲ An unusual approach to time-keeping is found in these clocks, which in some cases also show the day of the week. Most frequently seen in the larger railway stations, it can be argued that they show the time more quickly and more accurately than any other type. Illumination is provided by two fluorescent lamps. Designer Ernesto Rogers. Maker Solari Remigio & C-Fabbrica.

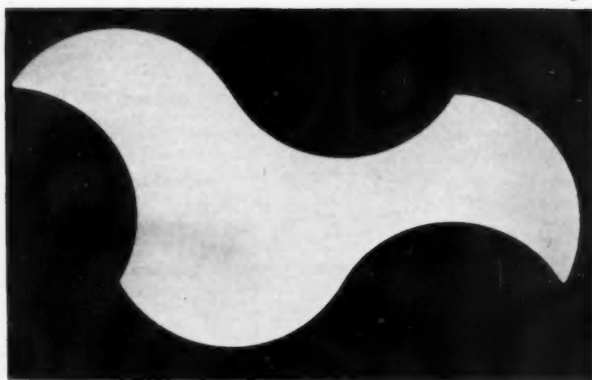
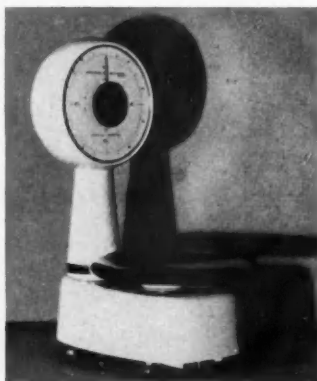
▼ This chair has an ash tree frame and a plastic covered seat and back. Designed by Gio Ponti and made by Figli di A. Cassina Amedeo, Meda.



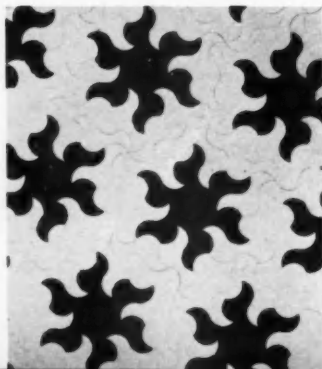
The ingenious tubular steel framework allows this chair to be tipped on its back to give an alternative sitting position. Designed by Gastone Rinaldi for Rima.



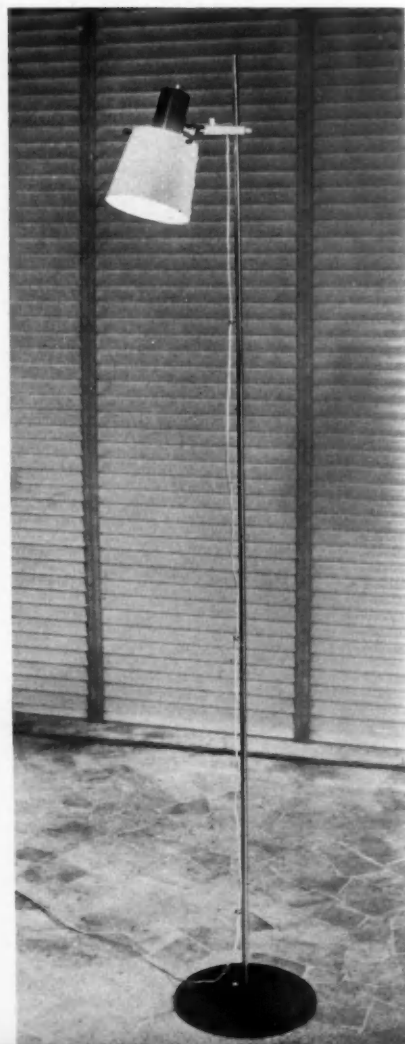
This scale has the essential virtue of clarity, particular attention having been paid to the neat layout of the dial with its simple sans serif numerals. Designed and made by Roto, Pavia.



Porcelain floor tile and one of the many patterns that can be achieved by different arrangements. Designed by Marco Zanuso and Alberta Scarzella.



Gino Sarfatti's design for a multi-purpose lamp consists of nine component parts which can be assembled to make ten different models. These photographs show two ways in which the lamp can be used. It is made by Arteluce Soc, Milan.



# NEWS

## EXHIBITIONS

### Packaging for the provinces

T H M Partners recently held a small exhibition of its work in Leicester, the home of some important light industries. We believe this to be the first time that a London firm of industrial designers has taken the initiative in bringing a display of packaging and commercial interior design to one of our provincial centres of industry. Invitations were sent to directors and sales managers of Leicester's many firms, to local advertising agents and printers, and to the members of Leicester's Publicity Club. The Leicester Chamber of Commerce was consulted and the Principal of the Leicester College of Art gave encouragement.

### British exhibition in Denmark

More than 500 British firms will be represented at the British Exhibition to be held at Copenhagen from September 29-October 16. The exhibition is sponsored jointly by the British Import Union of Denmark and the Federation of British Industries, and is being organised by the F B I's subsidiary, British Overseas Fairs Ltd. The total amount of space occupied by stands will be about 125,000 sq ft, divided between the Forum and the Tivoli Gardens. The great majority of the British products displayed will be on the stands taken by Danish agents, most of whom will be representing three or more British principals; but well over 100 firms in the U K have booked space direct and will be exhibiting on their own account.

### Clocks and watches

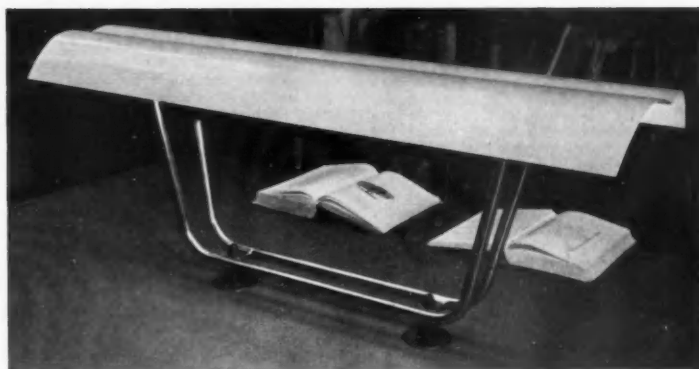
An exhibition organised by the British Clock and Watchmakers' Association in conjunction with the Worshipful Company of Watchmakers and the British Horological Institute is to be held in the Goldsmiths' Hall, Foster Street, London EC2, from October 3-8. The exhibition, which is called 'Five centuries of British timekeeping', will be opened by the Lord Mayor of London at noon on October 3. Some of the best examples of modern clock and watch design will be shown, and in the historical section will be included watches worn by Mary, Queen of Scots and Charles I on the scaffold.

### RCA exhibition

An RCA exhibition of industrial and graphic design will be held in the Western Galleries, Imperial Institute Road, SW7, from July 9-23. It will be open on weekdays, including Saturdays, from 10 am-5.30 pm. An open-air exhibition by students in the School of Sculpture of the R C A will also be held on these dates in the gardens of the Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, SW7. It will be open from 10 am-6 pm on weekdays and from 2 pm-6 pm on Sundays.

### Radio and Television Exhibition

The 22nd National Radio and Television Exhibition (The Radio Show) is to be held at Earl's Court, London SW5, from August 23-September 3. August 23 is a special



### Library light fitting

Light fitting by Westwood, Sons & Harrison, in the library of Australia House. The fitting consists of a 3 inch fluorescent tube and the reflector is of stove enamelled metal.

pre-view day for the trade and invited guests only. The exhibition will be open to the public from August 24 onwards. The Exhibition is national in character and includes within its scope every aspect of the radio and electronic industries, and all kinds of associated apparatus, such as gramophones, records and accessories, electronic instruments and devices, test gear, as well as the various related services in the industries concerned. Exhibitors are encouraged to include working demonstrations on their stands, as these are always an attraction to the public.

### 'Lighting and the Architect'

An exhibition with the title 'Lighting and the Architect' was recently opened in the Mazda Lamp and Lighting Showroom at Crown House, Aldwych, London. This exhibition demonstrated some of the principal lines of approach followed by B T H engineers working to provide lamps, lighting fittings, control gear and special equipment, so designed that they will combine with the many materials and products used in the building industry.

### Photographic exhibition

The annual exhibition of work by students of the Polytechnic School of Photography will be held from July 8-14 inclusive this year. The school of Photography, 309 Regent Street, London W1, will be open for visitors to view the exhibition on July 8 from 5 pm-8 pm, on July 9 from 10 am-6 pm and from July 11-14 from 10 am-8 pm.

### Textile display

'The Ambassador' has organised a stand for 60 firms to represent the British textile industry at the International Textile Exhibition at Brussels, open until July 10.

## CONFERENCES

### BCC

The British Colour Council's Interior Decoration and Design Division recently held its thirteenth Designers' Conference, and over 130 delegates and guests attended the reception and dinner held in the Tate Gallery. The Chairman was Henry G. Dowling and the principal guest Sir John Rothenstein, Director of the Tate Gallery. Among the speakers were Paul Reilly, Deputy Director of the CoID, Commander Halifax, and Perry Marthin.

### 'Crossroads'

W. M. de Majo, well known London consultant designer, was invited by the Chairman of the Programme Committee, Mr Will Burtin, to be one of the principal speakers at the International Design Conference which was held in Aspen, Colorado, U S A, from June 13-18 (DESIGN May page 8). The title of the conference was 'Crossroads - What are the directions of the arts?'

## COMPETITIONS

### Engineering designers

The examinations for 1955, organised by the Institution of Engineering Designers, are planned to begin on the second Monday in October (entries in the British Isles only). Arrangements will be made at any centre where the number of candidates is large enough. The latest date of entry is August 15 and inquiries should be addressed to the General Secretary, the Institution of Engineering Designers, 38 Portland Place, London W1.

### Peak District National Park

The board of the P D National Park invites artists and student artists to submit specimens of a form of badge, sign or emblem which will suitably and graphically display either some distinctive feature of the National Park (eg Peveril Castle), or the object for which the Board was created: ie the preservation and enhancement of natural beauty within the area of the park, and the encouragement of improved facilities for open-air recreation by the general public. The design of the badge should be sufficiently bold to allow of its reduction for printing on writing paper, to a size approximately one inch square, and for reproduction in one colour. The actual specimens to be submitted might be (very approximately) six inches square, and on these the board considers it advisable to limit the number of colours to three. The first prize is £50, the second prize £25, and the third prize £15. All entries should be sent to D. G. Gilman, Clerk of the Board, County Offices, St Mary's Gate, Derby. The closing date for the receipt of entries is July 10. The board reserves the right to withhold prizes should no entry be considered worthy.

### Market research competition

In view of the importance to Great Britain's economic future of the country's ability

to compete successfully in overseas markets, the Royal Society of Arts and the British Export Trade Research Organisation (1952) Ltd (BETRO) have decided to organise jointly a competition, the purpose of which is to stimulate interest in the subject of market research. Competitors are required to write an essay for which the winner will be given a grant of £500 to be provided by BETRO to enable him to study marketing conditions in an overseas country at first hand. He will be expected on his return to submit a report of his investigations, which should be of value not only to himself but to all those interested in this subject. The entries will be judged by a panel of four, two members of which will be appointed by the Royal Society of Arts, and two by BETRO. The competition is open to men or women already working or intending to work for a British Company or organisation either in the United Kingdom or in an overseas country; they must be less than 35 years of age on September 1 1955. Competitors are required to write an essay of between 2,000 and 3,000 words in length, excluding appendices, on the subject of 'How can market research help towards profitable export marketing?' Entries should be typewritten in double spacing on one side of the paper only, and all pages should be securely fastened together and not by paper clips. Photographs and diagrams may be included if desired. Competitors must submit their essays and entry forms together to the Secretary, Royal Society of Arts, 6-8 John Adam Street, Adelphi, London WC2, on or before September 1. Further particulars and entry forms should be obtained from this address.

#### Textile Institute competitions

The Textile Institute's Design Competitions for 1955 have attracted 117 entries from technical institutions throughout the country. Prizes offered in the eight different sections of the competitions amount to nearly £300. The prize money is provided from Institute funds, the Beanland Bequest, the Irish Linen Guild, Messrs R. Greg & Co Ltd, Holdsworth & Gibb Ltd, and Carpet Trades Ltd; the Lancashire County Council awards a further £25 to students living in its administrative area. Adjudication of the designs submitted will take place during July and August. The prizewinning designs will be displayed later at various colleges and institutions throughout the country, thus providing a valuable and interesting preview of the work of the textile designers of the future.

### MISCELLANEOUS

#### American research

An American design student, W. C. MacPherson, now engaged on research at the Georgia Institute of Technology, U.S.A., hopes to continue his work at a European university. The subject of his thesis is 'An analysis of the phylogeny and coalescence of industrial design', and the underlying question is whether the traditional approach to industrial design, which he terms 'styling', is detrimental to progress. He proposes to cover a wide field in his research, dealing not only with the present situation but also including many historical references. Mr MacPherson is now working under Associate Professor Hin Bredendieck, Head of Industrial Design Curriculum, School of Architecture, Georgia Institute of Technology. To help him in planning his research, he would welcome suggestions to P.O. Box 602, Georgia Institute of Technology, 225 North Avenue, N.W., Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A.

#### Japanese design

The Japanese Industrial Designers' Association, established in September 1954, has 34 members, and is the only professional organisation of industrial designers in Japan. The president, Hisaro Kano, says that some of the members have secured annual prizes in the Industrial Design Competition sponsored by the Mainichi Press, and that although J.I.D.A. does not yet possess its own journal, intense propaganda is being carried on by means of newspapers, magazines, radio and television. Committees have been formed to deal with exhibitions, patents and financial problems.

#### Bicentenary medal

In *DESIGN* December 1954 page 44 it was wrongly stated that the 'Bicentenary Medal' of the Royal Society of Arts was to be awarded annually to a person who was not an industrial designer. The medal cannot be awarded to any person in his capacity as industrial designer, but this does not prevent an industrial designer from receiving the award.

#### Credit

*DESIGN* May page 15: the Westinghouse refrigerator shown in illustrations 15 and 16 was designed by Peter Muller Munk Associates.

## LETTERS

#### 'Design in British Industry'

SIR: I should like to congratulate Mr Farr on his excellent book 'Design in British Industry'. It is certainly a most comprehensive survey which is sure to take its place on the reference shelves of all interested in this most important subject. I am particularly grateful for what is said about the work of the Industrial Art Committee of the Federation of British Industries, of which I am chairman.

My reason for this letter is that the author expresses regret that the Federation of British Industries has not carried its support for good design to the point of taking a stand at the British Industries Fair in order to exhibit well designed products, and in this way to influence British manufacturers generally. There are, I suggest, good reasons why this cannot be done. The Federation of British Industries is a voluntary body financed by subscriptions from a very large number of trade associations and individual firms, many of whom exhibit, of course, at the British Industries Fair in their own right. There are obvious difficulties, therefore, in discriminating between members in making a selective exhibit of the type which the author advocates, quite apart from the cost of the stand which could not equitably be paid for out of these subscriptions, many of which come from firms not concerned with product design.

Apart from this, my Committee would not regard themselves as competent to sit in judgment on the products of their own firms and of their competitors. Any selection committee must be completely impartial, and the very constitution of the Industrial Art Committee would make it difficult for that impartiality to be manifest. To that extent the author's objective that 'the majority of manufacturers would be



#### New Art Editor for *DESIGN*

Kenneth Garland has been appointed Art Editor of *DESIGN*. Mr Garland was trained at the L.C.C. Central School of Arts and Crafts. For the last two years he has been art editor of a group of furnishing magazines published by the National Trade Press Ltd. Peter Hatch continues his association with the magazine as an Editorial Adviser.

prepared to listen to advice from their own Federation' might well not be achieved. It was precisely because of this desire for obvious impartiality that the Federation of British Industries has, ever since 1944, stressed that the Council of Industrial Design should be financed entirely by a grant from the State so that its independence would be maintained.

We feel that the taking of such a stand is the proper province of the Council. In fact the Council took one at the 1953 Fair, and this aroused favourable comment. I should not like the position of the Federation of British Industries in this matter to be misunderstood.

ERNEST W. GOODALE  
Chairman: Industrial Art  
Committee  
Federation of British Industries  
21 Tothill Street  
London SW1

#### 'Strategy and tactics'

SIR: Here at last, in the leading article of *DESIGN* for April, we find the two kinds of leadership - authoritarian and the reverse - displayed for our examination. But I wonder whether the CoID belongs as unashamedly to the second and less spectacular group as the editor suggests. The advantages of the second 'non-Russian' type of leadership have been described, and even measured, by a growing number of social-psychologists, the latest to come to my attention being Dr W. H. Scott of Liverpool University. He tells us that the most effective type of leader is the one "who indeed takes the lead... yet seeks to involve as many members as possible in the assumption of some measure of responsibility, etc". Applied to the CoID this means that provincial groups, professional and trade associations, should not only be allowed, but actively encouraged to do their own selecting and form their own 'Design Review'. In so far as the CoID keeps the selection in its own hand, it conforms to the authoritarian school. A simple test whereby the two schools may be distinguished is to



ascertain whether a proposition is being considered on its merits or in relation to the prestige and influence of some design group. Those who practise the "Russian technique" favour the second criterion and equate 'good' design with the preferences and interests of their own coterie.

R. D. BEST  
Best & Lloyd Ltd  
Handsworth  
Birmingham 21

### 'In all directions'

SIR: Mr Norbert Dutton considers our existing advance direction signs satisfactory and prefers the priority given to route numbers rather than to place-names. I have long maintained that the majority of drivers look for names rather than numbers (especially on cross-country journeys) and this is confirmed by the recent decision of the Ministry to put names larger than numbers on its through-direction signs round London, quite apart from Continental practice, for instance in France, where *Route Nationale* numbers are subsidiary. As to white letters on a blue background (as in Switzerland and Germany) being less easily read than black on white, I think Mr Dutton disregards the question of scenic back-

ground to the signs as a whole. The blue is distinctive against green fields or buildings and in practice I found it superior to other colour schemes on a tour through six countries. Regarding the use of non-capitals for place-names, I remain unrepentant, in spite of Mr Brook Crutchley's blast from the trumpet of tradition. Perhaps you will give me room to expand my reasoning, and illustrate my case. The ascenders and descenders in a word affect its shape even at the quickest of glances. A line of capitals inevitably takes on the same general form. Thus 'Winchester' with two ascenders is very easily distinguishable from 'Hungerford' with two ascenders but also with a descender. On the other hand WINCHESTER and HUNGERFORD form two blocks which at a distance are too similar, see below. The argument that capitals are more 'orderly' is beside the point, where instant legibility should be the first consideration. I am at one with Mr Brook Crutchley in asking for order and clarity in typography. I find the restless variety of your headings at variance with all decent principles of printing designs. The May issue contains some shocking examples. This business of road-signs, however, is another issue altogether.

NOEL CARRINGTON  
29 Percy Street  
London W1

HUNGERFORD

WINCHESTER

Hungerford

Winchester

### Consulting-room

In *DESIGN* January page 24 we showed a doctor's waiting-room which had been refurnished in the modern style. Here is part of an ophthalmic optician's consulting-room designed by Hille of London Ltd for the Association of Optical Practitioners. The AOP has about 4,000 members and the optical equipment in the consulting-room is typical of the designs being made in this country. An AOP pamphlet describing the scheme points out that doctors who wish to tackle alone the problem of designing their waiting-rooms should seek the qualities of simplicity and freshness: instead of brown or beige for the colour scheme they can use coral, lime-green or mauve, and take advantage of the sleek forms of modern furniture.



# BOOKS

**Design in British Industry, A Mid-century Survey, Michael Farr, Cambridge University Press, 60s**

Familiarity with many of the illustrations might lead anyone looking through this book casually to assume that it was merely a review of current production. It is very much more than that. In fact it is a book of immense practical value to manufacturers, especially in the domestic market. Inspired by Dr Pevsner's pioneer research into the same subject in the 'thirties, it is full of meat, and entirely fresh at that. It is a great relief not to read often-repeated clichés about the state of design in this or that trade, but to have before us the result of field-study at first hand. Mr Farr has clearly undertaken over a number of years the task of finding out just what the process of industrial design entails in most of the important industries concerned, and similarly what the atmosphere is in the principal retail outlets. He reports the facts with detached and scholarly method and, though not afraid of recommending improvements in organisation, he does not allow us to fall into any easy optimism. I am glad to see him write "The greatest mistake that propaganda can make is to lure manufacturers and retailers into improvements of design by promising them an increase of sales". Only I would rather he had written "immediate increase". Reward will come, but it may take time. The survey not only covers industries and distribution; Mr Farr has made a very useful study of designers' professional life, propaganda associations, design education and exhibition technique. The illustrations which he has selected to accompany his text are not only admirably chosen in themselves, but are underlined by really informative captions. Perhaps I may be allowed to regret the total omission of printing from the survey which was to cover "those things which industrial factories and workshops have made for domestic use". In the book, not to mention the newspaper, the printer produces an article for domestic use on a considerable scale, and the story of continuous improvements within the last 50 years is significant, if only because the connection between William Morris and commercial printers is irrefutable and because this industry, more than any, has evolved a 'contemporary' style which at its best is influenced neither by antiquarianism nor modernism. Mr Farr's own book is an appropriate example.

I would also question the severity with which Mr Farr treats the typical store, that devotes all its space to those furnishings which in its experience sell best, rather than give its public a chance of selecting from contemporary designs. I do not think it can be seriously advanced that a retailer has a moral obligation to educate his public at the expense of turnover, for with limited space, the stocking of slow-selling designs means just that. It can be argued that eventually such a policy will win a new and younger public, but that is a different justification altogether.

At the end of the book Dr Pevsner contributes a postscript. He raises questions of fundamental importance which underlie assumptions often made far too complacently by propagandists; namely what is the essential character of good design and can its social and ethical place be defined? He does not pretend to see wholly eye to eye with Mr Farr or to give his own answers with absolute finality. That such questions must be faced seems to be more than ever necessary, and many of the aberrations

which we have witnessed in this century are really due to the absence of a valid philosophy by which to judge artistic tendencies or the resultant products. A point of great interest is touched on by Dr Pevsner, namely the nationality of taste. Mr Farr, who for the major part of his book seems indeed to put most blame on the distributor for the prevalence of ill-designed products, does eventually come to the snobbery of the public which in effect conditions the demand. Dr Pevsner believes that the British are "in need of an artificially built up security around themselves, and Hepplewhite chairs and chintzy curtains give them that". "Nations which have accepted back seats - Sweden, Denmark, Holland and Austria - are more likely to develop modern design and apply sensitivity to it." I myself question this psychological diagnosis. The countries which have the highest standard of contemporary design, Switzerland and Sweden for instance, also lack the class structure of Great Britain. The 'dream-house' standards now to be seen in furnishing stores were set originally by the aristocratic homes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, watered down for a vast middle class, and illustrated in every detail in the glossy weeklies and monthlies for the last 50 years. Our nineteenth and even twentieth century architects tied themselves to these models and who can blame the masses for taking their taste from the professionals. That architects have since changed their loyalties is another matter. The mental conditioning to which the masses have been subjected for half a century is not so easily reversed. It may be simpler to blame the trader or manufacturer for the 'deplorable state of taste' but I doubt if such a policy will produce the civilisation to which we aspire.

NOEL CARRINGTON

**Lettera**, Armin Haab & Alex Stocker, Arthur Niggli & Willy Verkauf, Teufen, Switzerland; Sole Agents for the United Kingdom, Alec Tiranti Ltd, London, 42s

The radical change which has taken place in typographic design during the last 25 years (in all except books, which are not our concern in this instance) has focused attention on esoteric typefaces and hand-drawn alphabets. Designer-typographers, as distinct from compositor-typographers, have shown an increasing interest in the possibilities of using strange typefaces for display purposes, frequently with such success that graphic illustration has proved unnecessary. The fact that the actual type is often no longer in existence has not been a deterrent, as pasted-up letters are simply photographed to the size required and a block made. In this way rich and scintillating work has been evolved by the masterly handling of contrasts and space, and with the emphasis on letter forms throughout rather than a balance between type and graphic imagery. To all those dealing with or interested in this type of work, 'Lettera' should prove invaluable. It is an alphabet circus, a letter and form merry-go-round, a typographic hall of distorting mirrors in which the original chaste Roman letters rarely appear. Little attempt has been made to cover the normal historical ground work, and what there is might well have been omitted as this can be obtained satisfactorily in more academic books. WILLIAM STOBBS

**A Book of Pictorial Perspective**, Gwen White, John Murray 15s

From Brunelleschi, who formulated the mathematical principles of perspective, to Turner, who taught it in the Academy schools, perspective has been the only exact and indispensable scientific instrument used by the artist in his depiction of nature. Since Turner, perspective has declined in importance until we reached the stage where



### Hairdressing salon

The ladies' hairdressing salon in the Leeds Industrial Co-operative Society's premises. The lighting scheme, devised by the GEC in conjunction with the principal designers, Henry Serventi Ltd, affords an example of the value of close co-operation between designer and illuminating engineer.

the teaching of perspective was regarded with an obsessive horror. This book is to be welcomed as an indication of the revival of interest in perspective as an exact and scientific aid. Unfortunately it is written and planned after the fashion of that kind of book which sets out to give a novel and simple approach to a difficult subject and with its novelties only succeeds in confusing the reader. The only way to teach perspective is from the beginning, and the author acknowledges her failure by writing an explanation at the end of the book which is far more valuable than the rest of the work.

REUBEN WHEELER

**Printing for Pleasure**, John Ryder, Phoenix House Ltd, London, 9s 6d

For those who feel inclined to practise the art of printing as a hobby, this little book will be found informative and helpful. It has been written particularly for the amateur, and not for those who may have in mind a profitable side-line. A guide to the material and equipment necessary, how to use them, sources of supply, and the cost, are dealt with adequately. There is an interesting chapter on 'The Little Presses', which touches briefly on the origin and achievements of some of the better-known private presses of the past, and the illustrations of specimen type settings show the agreeable results which may be obtained by the amateur. The author writes with enthusiasm of his chosen hobby and achieves the double object of enlightening the beginner and entertaining the professional printer and print buyer.

H. G. TREMLETT

**Lettering at Work**, Frederick A. Horn, The Studio, 25s

This is a collection, a scrapbook of lettering in use on trademarks, packs, products, letter-heads and ephemera, largely from foreign sources. Some categories are excellent throughout; some, like most of the product name-plates, are low by any standard. The first thing one notices is the almost impeccable printing-type forms, doing their job dully or well according to their selection and disposition but usually with clarity. The more flexible calligraphic lettering loses nothing in legibility when, in good hands, it follows an equally severe discipline.

J. BERSFORD-EVANS

### Acknowledgement

The photograph of the Dublin bus station on page 43 is reproduced by permission of the 'Architectural Review'.

### Designers in this issue

Peggy Angus, ARCA, MSIA (12). H. P. Banahan (43). Lester Beall (41). Leonard Beaumont, FSIA (22). Peter Bell, MSIA (36). Misha Black, OBE, FSIA, MINSTRA (35). L. W. Blackwell (32). Wim Brusse (41). Eugenio Carmi (40). R. L. Carter, DESRCA (15). Roger Clynes (15). Thurlow Conolly (43). Kathleen Darby, MSIA (22). Robin Day, ARCA, FSIA (13, 15, 33). W. M. de Mayo, MBE, MSIA (22). Jacques Dubois (41). Aidron Duckworth, DESRCA (32). Norbert Dutton, FSIA (19). Charles Eames (42). Tom Eckersley, OBE, FSIA (39). Hermann Eidenberg (40). Grant Featherston (38). Colin Forbes (12, 15, 16). Frederick Gibberd, FRIBA, MTPI, FSIA (11-16). Alexander Gibson, ARIBA, AADipl (35). Ruth Gill, MSIA (18). Richard Ginori (45). Milner Gray, RDI, FSIA (17). Peter Hatch, MSIA (art editor). Ian Henderson, MSIA (34). F. H. K. Henrion, MBE, FSIA (cover, 21, 22). Carl Jacobs (34). H. N. James, MSIA (28). G. A. Jenkins (33). Kenneth Lambie, MSIA (43). F. Lampl, FCIA, MSGR, MSIA (30). F. H. Lang (34). Stig Lindberg (41). R. E. Long (32). T. Lupton, MA, ARIBA, AADipl (33). June Lyon (15). John McGuire (42, 43). A. J. Milne, MSIA (13, 14). Pierre Monnerat (40). John Morton, ARIBA, AADipl (33). Robert Nicholson, MSIA (14). Roger Nicholson, ARCA, MSIA (14). Hiroshi Ochi (40). Gio Ponti (44, 45). Philip Pound (14). Ernest Race, RDI, FSIA (34). Peter Ray, FSIA (18). L. A. Reason (31). Tibor Reich, FSIA (14). Jacques Richez (40). Gastone Rinaldi (45). Ernesto Rogers (45). Roto (45). Kenneth Rowntree (18). Ebbe Sadolin (45). J. E. Sander, MSIA (22). Gino Sarfatti (45). Alberta Scarzella (45). Hans Schlegel, FSIA (47). Michael Scott (43). Patrick Scott (43). C. L. Sholes (26, 27). A. J. Stiff, ARIBA (14). Peter Taylor, LSIA (14). Franz Wagner (27, 28). Ward & Austin (33). Dennis Whitehead (28). D. Woulfe, MSIA (34). Marco Zanuso (45).

P.  
rd  
(6).  
(5).  
(4).  
CA  
ly  
in  
le  
(3).  
rt  
m  
-  
n  
l,  
r  
A  
y,  
.  
i  
i